



**FINDING PEACE AMONGST RESTLESS AND UNATONED BONES:  
A DIALOGUE ON BÚMUNTÙ FROM THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed. I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Irene Margaret Sephton  
December, 2018

## DEDICATION

*“The world of humanity is possessed of two wings: the male and the female.<sup>1</sup> So long as these two wings are not equivalent in strength, the bird will not fly.”*

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá*

I dedicate this work to *our* daughters Elikya Areti Dinanga and Ilunga Ida Lorian. Thank you for continually keeping my vision on a hope for the future. May our journey together inspire you both to embody *Búmùntù* – in each of your respective realities – and to strive towards a future where the (many) wings of humanity are equivalent in strength, that we may fly.

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<sup>1</sup> In the Bahá’i writings this metaphor of the two wings of one bird is also applied to the relationship between science and religion. The equality it expresses can be applied further yet, to the relationship between different ways of being and ways of knowing. I use this quote in its broadest sense here.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: MWAFWAIKO

In the above “declaration” I was obliged to make the statement that “except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone.” It seems a strange statement to make in the context of a dissertation whose central guide is the concept of *Búmùntù* and whose evolution has so fundamentally been shaped by “*le rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir*” (the encounter of giving and receiving)<sup>2</sup> occurring with countless individuals and communities over the course of six long years. It is impossible to name all these individuals, nor capture my immense gratitude for such contributions. However, it is the term “*Wafwako*” or “*Mwafwaiko (pl)*” in Kiluba (the language of the Luba-Katanga) which most powerfully captures their part in this work and the extent of my gratitude. This term, often translated as “thank you,” is in fact a term derived from the verb *kufwa/kufa* (to die). And so, whilst the term is often used to express gratitude, a more literal translation is closer to the statement: “you have died here.” It is thus a term that acknowledges that in every act of giving, one gives a little of themselves. Framed in another way, one dies a little death in order to give life to something. It is such a contribution that I wish to acknowledge here.

To my daughter, Elikya Areti Dinanga, I thank you for your patience and tolerance of “this thing that must not be named,” for accompanying me on the journey, for keeping me forever grounded, and reminding me to breathe and appreciate the many precious moments of life.

To my mother, Euthymia Sephton, for always holding the fort for us and your endless “positive thinking” mantras — none of this would have been possible without you.

To my squad of official and unofficial supervisors and mentors. (Papa) Clovis Alidor Mwamba Kayembe, it was you that set me on the track. Thank you for the long afternoons rolled into evenings immersed in deep conversation and forever encouraging me with the assurance that “*Muana utu ukuma ngoma bantu bakola baja maja*” (a child beats the drum, adults also dance). Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha, for inspiring me with your writing and for enabling my

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<sup>2</sup> The notion of an “encounter of giving and receiving” is a reference to Léopold Senghor, founder of the Négritude movement, who argued for this as part of the “civilization of the universal” (Mabana 2014).

(daunting) vision to voyage with my five-year-old daughter to an unknown (and notoriously challenging) destination possible. You gave me a home, a family, a plethora of networks, and countless hours of advice, translations, comradery and humour. To Jacques Boulet, thank you for returning to Congo with me after all these years. Your inspiration and encouragement has given me the courage to forever seek that borderlands space, that “open wound,” where different worlds grate and bleed into each other.<sup>3</sup> To Damian Grenfell, you have kept it real, grounded me when I’ve fallen into an overly antagonistic view of the system in which I myself reside and challenged me to speak not only to those that would naturally agree with my position. Thank you for sticking it out with me, even after the “Lion and the Ant” episode. Anne Brown, thank you for coming on board just at the right time and offering your impeccable blend of intellectual rigor and tender humanness. To Jonathan Makuwira and June Allan for a fine welcoming to beginnings. And to Charles Hunt for providing the additional scaffolding when it was needed.

To my many colleagues, here in Australia and internationally, who contributed to the shaping of this research project in the early days, its practical execution, and its formation into the form of this thesis: Charlotte Mertens, Pamela Couture, John Mutombo, Andre Kabamba, Anicet Mbangui Muingi, Ilgha Monga Ilunga, Yaso Nadarajah, and Stefani Vasil.

Mostly, however, this *Mwafwaiko* is addressed to Kamina and to Congo. You welcomed me, as a foreigner (or as a “sister in law”) into your arms and gave generously. Through you, I have experienced the gift that is *Búmùntù*, as well as just some of the many challenges that are confronted in the contemporary struggle for a “real peace.” I can say that I have died numerous deaths and been brought back to life. To Grand Chef Kasongo Wa Nyembo and the Notables of the Luba Royal Court at Kinkunki, thank you! You welcomed us onto Luba lands and assured us with the protection of the ancestors. To Bishop Ntambo Nkulu Ntanda and the United Methodist Community in Kamina for your invitation and your generous hosting of me during my initial field trip. To Fabrice Ilunga and Shabana Banza Horace for your expert assistance, guidance and encouragement. To our original research crew:

---

<sup>3</sup>This is a reference to Anzaldúa’s (1999, p. 3) articulation of the U.S-Mexican border which she describes as “*una herida abierta* [an open wound]” where one world grates against the other and bleeds, where the “lifeblood of two worlds” merges to form a third, a “border culture.”

Kasongo Nkulu Nancy, Ilunga Kazadi Choudelle, and Maloba Kaodi Douce. You have inspired me. I am so happy to have seen you each graduate despite the immense challenges you have faced. To those that joined us later, Boshwaa Nkulu Kilumba and Billy Mishindo Ngoy. Thank you for your generous assistance and the many laughs. I look forward to once again travelling together to the village of Kamaungu and discovering whether the name “Akká” has indeed become famous. To Netto for always getting us back before the storms hit. To our home and our family in Kamina. (Maman) Ilunga Wa Ilunga Angeline, wafwako bikatampe bikatampe!! You were there for us as the formidable matriarch of the house. I will never forget your vigil by Elikya’s bed at l’hospital SNCC. Thank you also to Ngoy Wa Ilunga Edithe, Kanyema Masengo and the rest of the extended family for all your generosity and support. To those precious people who offered the same immense hospitality on our way through: (Papa) Vincent Umbalo and family in Lubumbashi (2014 & 2015), Da Sally Ilunga and family in Lubumbashi (2015), Guyguy and Chantal Kankolongo in Johannesburg (2014 & 2015). To Jordy Fulbright and Badi Katunango who facilitated these connections for us. Of course, I haven’t even begun to list the many individuals and communities that contributed to the dialogues that form the major contribution of this thesis. Their names are recorded in *Appendix F: Table of Dialogues*. However, some of these individuals deserve a special mention for their ongoing contribution beyond the more “official” dialogues: Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert, Véronique Kilumba Nkulu, Tata Amedée, and Rev. Odette Makonga Kyakutala. Also, other individuals that took on particular roles in facilitating contact with different networks are Pastor Waudru Maloba in Kamina, and Richard Loshita and Jerry Kalonji in Lubumbashi.

Finally, I would like to make a special acknowledgement to two individuals who are no longer with us. Rev. Boniface Kabongo Ilunga, your guidance and support was instrumental in the formation of this thesis. Your legacy lives on in the lives of the many people you touched. Valdez Disele, your life was violently taken when you were much too young, I will forever remember your smile and your eagerness to learn.

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# RESEARCH ABSTRACT

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*The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a nation which is often immediately associated with violence. For well over a century it has been marked by a litany of horrors, further cementing colonial imagery of a perennial “heart of darkness.” Whilst the reality of violence is undeniable, dominant representations of such violence are just one indication that the struggle for peace in the DRC occurs in the context of a contemporary global landscape intimately bound up in enduring legacies of colonialism and imperialism. Beyond sensationalized Western media accounts, evidence of this can also be seen in the dominant peace interventions and strategies promoted by leading states, leading international organisations and international financial institutions. Indeed, the international peace-building effort in the DRC may provide a powerful case for the argument that pessimism on humanness more broadly (exaggerated by an even deeper pessimism on African humanness) has reduced both curiosity in exploring the roots of violence and creativity in responding to it (de Zulueta 2006). Alternative narratives exist, however. This thesis invites the reader on a journey to Kamina, the capital of the Haut-Lomami province, DRC, to engage in a dialogue on humanness, violence and peace from another angle. Using the concept of Búmùntù (authentic Personhood) from the Luba tradition to guide such a dialogue, I consider the place and meaning of peace associated with this concept and consider the struggle for such a peace in the contemporary local landscape, replete with its restless and unatoned bones. Far from the image of a perennial “heart of darkness,” a dialogue on Búmùntù offers a humanising narrative of the struggle for peace. It points to the existence of a rich tradition, which places peace (expressed more often as social harmony) as the defining characteristic of our humanness. Whilst this dialogue points also to the many complexities and paradoxes associated with Búmùntù and the struggle for peace on a contemporary landscape, it demonstrates the way in which Búmùntù endures and continues to offer a shared frame of reference through which individuals, families, communities and Luba society as a whole are able to critically reflect on their current lived experiences and strive towards a (sometimes more and sometimes less cohesive) vision of peace. Finally, and most importantly, a dialogue on Búmùntù points us to an onus: that “to be’ is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings.” Accordingly, a dialogue on Búmùntù obliges us to be curious, to be creative, and to become “authentically” human.*

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## PERSONAL PREFACE



Re-Voicing Lontulu, 2009

It was 2003 as the Second Congo War was “officially” ended that marks a beginning point in the conception of this work. I was 20 years old, a fine arts student, and musician of Greek-Australian heritage. I was not yet born into the harsh realities of the globe. Nevertheless, as it would happen, a series of chance encounters was to knock me off my firm footing on a relatively stable and innocuous earth and oblige me instead towards a confrontation with the human experience of violence and its many ripple effects.

One of these encounters, and certainly the most influential, was my meeting with a Congolese musician whose life course had been dramatically shaken by the Congo wars of the 1990s and who had found himself seeking asylum in Australia. The Australia he arrived in, however, had in the very same year (2001) witnessed the tragic Tampa crisis, a defining moment in contemporary asylum seeker policies. It would be a decade before he would be able to call Australia home. Nevertheless, despite the sometimes, perhaps even often, hostile context in which lives are lived, life does indeed continue. And so, our chance encounter would evolve into a musical collaboration, which would become a long-term partnership, leading eventually to the birth of our daughter in 2010. Though now separated, through this relationship (and its extensions of family and community), I became entangled in a more complex world, one of violence, of trauma, of displacement, of family separation, of uncertainty. Always accompanied by life itself, experiences of love, of joy, of faith, of hope, of interpersonal conflict, of human error and, of course, of the mundane and ordinary.

My personal experiences encountered alongside the Congolese diaspora experience were, however, forever humbled by my continuous awareness of the ongoing crises persisting in the DRC, my developing interest in its history and the deeply saddening mirroring of the Congolese past in the Congolese present.

I uncovered an account of a public testimonial of 1905, at which Lontulu, a local Chief, had appeared before a Commission of Inquiry set to investigate the horrific human rights abuses committed by the Congo Free State. In front of the Commission, Lontulu was said to have laid 110 sticks. With each stick, he gave the name and narrated the accompanying and often horrific account of mutilation and massacre of each member of his village, whose life had been taken under King Leopold II's personal financial venture of extracting rubber by the enslavement and violent coercion the local population. Lontulu was amongst many Congolese who testified to the atrocities of this time. However, it was the imagery of the sticks that struck me, inanimate objects lying lifeless but powerful in the giving of names, laid out to bear witness on the soil. In my mind, however, the sticks were multiplied exorbitantly. Whilst debate continues over exact figures, they include millions representing the full scale of lives lost during the Congo Free State period;<sup>4</sup> an unknown number representing further needless loss of life during the Belgian colonial period (1908 to 1960), during the Congo Crisis (1960-1965), during the dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko (1965-1997); finally culminating in the widely reported figure of 5.4 million representing the full scale of the First and Second Congo Wars, eventually labelled as the second deadliest war since World War II (Coghlan et al. 2007).<sup>5</sup> Unlike the sticks carefully placed on the soil by Lontulu, these sticks would present an overwhelming mount. Their names and stories, some recorded, others merely absorbed into a mass of unknowns and insignificants, swirling in a furious coalescence of past and present. As an artist and activist, I found myself individually and then later in 2009, alongside the Melbourne Congolese Community, re-enacting the 1905 ritual accompanied by the contemporary narrative, the names of yesterday's victims became today's victims,

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<sup>4</sup> One of the more shocking estimates, presented by Hochschild (1998), is approximately 10 million people. This figure draws from an official Belgian report of 1919 stating that Congo's population was reduced by half during Leopold II's reign. It is, however, recognised that a firm estimate is not possible. For an account of the varying estimates and their criticisms see Dunn (2003) and Roes (2010).

<sup>5</sup> Whilst this statistic has been widely repeated and circulated by numerous media, human rights reports and research articles, it has also been strongly criticised. For an overview of criticisms see Turner (2013, pp. 121-123).

yesterday's extraction of rubber became today's extraction of tin, tantalum and tungsten.

It is the feeling evoked by the image of an overwhelming mount of sticks from which, in many ways, this work has evolved; a fundamental (but not always conscious) urge to grapple with the sheer injustice of such an intense and prolonged collective suffering, to grapple with my own personal encounter with that suffering and with its ripple effects.

Contributing towards this fundamental urge has been my personal and professional engagement with my own country's (Australia) colonial history. Specifically, for much of this time, I had been working within a local Aboriginal community-controlled child and family welfare organisation, a context in which the presence of historical wounds is very much recognised at the surface of contemporary social phenomena. From such a context, concepts of intergenerational trauma, collective trauma, lateral violence and cycles of violence as understood within the Aboriginal community in Australia became woven into my questioning regarding the Congolese experience. In addition, the statement "Our Children are Our Future" planted itself within me. Arising from an already painful history of cultural loss and devastation, it refers not only to the fact that the future of our globe rests in the hands of our children and grandchildren, but also in a much more tangible way, that the survival of marginalised cultures and knowledges lies in the ability to transfer such cultures and knowledges to their children and grandchildren.<sup>6</sup> At a personal level, "Our Children are Our Future" called me to assist my daughter in connecting to her own cultural heritage.

And so it was that I became curious about how the child makes sense of her parents' scars and their silences; about the origins of lullabies which seemed to carry violent and humiliating undertones; about the incredible capacity to live and be joyous whilst always internally carrying some degree of heavy burden; about the incredible capacity to connect deeply with other human beings whilst always maintaining somewhat of an internal

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<sup>6</sup> In Australia, the loss of Indigenous cultures and languages is palpable and is found in statistics such as the reduction of a thriving linguistic diversity of approximately 250 Indigenous languages to 120 languages still spoken today. Of these, 100 languages are described as severely/critically endangered and only 13 are considered "strong" and spoken by all age groups including children (Marmion, Obata & Troy 2014).

disposition of caution and scepticism; about the spirit of communitarianism within the Congolese community as well as the some of the more noxious vitriol of Congolese community politics. I became curious too about the story of my daughter's great-grandfather, an apparently powerful traditional chief, who, because of his tenacious clinging to the traditional "evil" of "witchcraft," lost his daughter into the embracing arms of the modern urban centre and the promise of salvation in Christ. I wondered whether it was indeed "evil" that he may have passed down to my daughter, if the many lines of connection had not been broken along the line.

If my own presence within this work is indicative of the ripple effects of violence across the diverse spatial geographies from DRC to Australia, the presence of my daughter (who travelled with me for field work in the DRC and to whom this work is primarily dedicated) is indicative of the ripple effects of violence across the temporal. As the years have rolled by, then, these curiosities about the Congolese diaspora experience have regularly interrupted my reading of reports of "unimaginable," "incomprehensible" and "insensate"<sup>7</sup> violence which continued to emanate from the nation, causing me to reflect upon the powerful presence of the past in the present. The ever-expanding mount of sticks remained as an image, carrying the overwhelming nature of the intense and prolonged collective historical suffering upon which the sufferings of today occur. It was this meeting of the past and present, the personal and political, in contemporary expressions of violence which I found powerfully captured in the poetic prose of an imagined unidentified African soldier in Gomo's *"A Fine Madness."* A soldier who, huddled against the night in the midst of the chaos of the Second Congo War, finds himself wondering whether his own great-grandfather's bones lie amongst the many other *"restless and unatoned bones"* which occasionally resurface to remind us to "take notice of the past in order to recognize it as the faulty foundation of the faulty present.... a wake-up call to recognize the present and the future as a resolution of an action that originates in the past.... to see the future as directed by the present and the past" (Gomo 2010, p. 20).

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<sup>7</sup> The terms "unimaginable," "incomprehensible" and "insensate" are taken from a press conference statement of Lewis (2007) and allude to the often sensationalised Western media accounts of violence in the DRC which will be discussed later in this thesis.

It is such an imagining from which the title of this work was born; it is my attempt to engage with those "*restless and unatoned bones,*" perhaps even to hear them speak.

# INTRODUCTION

“Wako, Wako, Wako, Wako, Wako, Wako, Wako.....”

This is a welcome greeting that one is likely to receive on arrival in Kamina, a city of approximately 240,000 and capital of the Haut-Lomami Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).<sup>8</sup> It is a greeting in Kiluba, the language of the Baluba-Katanga. Depending on the enthusiasm of the greeter, it can extend exponentially, with an occasional ululation as interlude or a handshake which reverberates through the entire body. In response to this, a male is expected to reply “*Eyo Vidje*” and a female “*Eyo Mwa*.” Although contesting meanings exist, both can be translated loosely as “yes, my God” or “yes, divine one.” I was told that with such a response one is essentially recognising the divine in the other.<sup>9</sup> This greeting, then, can serve as a powerful introduction to *Búmùntù*.

*Búmùntù* (authentic Personhood) is a central concept in African philosophy.<sup>10</sup> Notoriously difficult to define, it is perhaps best known through the South African equivalent *Ubuntu* and is encapsulated in the often-quoted statement from Archbishop Desmond Tutu “my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours” (Hailey 2008, p. 2).<sup>11</sup> Shared across many peoples throughout sub-Saharan Africa under varying names,<sup>12</sup> the concept<sup>13</sup> is said to give voice to an African vision of genuine humanity in which to be human

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<sup>8</sup> According to the 2014 Annual Report of the Ministère de l'Intérieur et Sécurité (Province du Katanga) obtained in Kamina, the population of the territory of Kamina was 558,540. This was made up of the City of Kamina (Population: 237,466); the Chefferie of Kasongo Wa Nyembo (Population: 247,268); the Secteur of Kinda (Population: 73,806). (Ministère de l'Intérieur et Sécurité (Province du Katanga) 2014).

<sup>9</sup> In *Part Three: An Assemblage of Relational and Dialogical Encounters*, a deeper exploration of this greeting and its responses will reveal multiple perspectives on their meanings, both confirming and contesting the meanings offered here.

<sup>10</sup> More specifically, it is a central concept within *Bantu Philosophy*, a broad term denoting a body of work by 20<sup>th</sup> century African intellectuals and founders of contemporary African philosophy which circumscribes the particular philosophy, religious worldview and ethical principles of Bantu peoples (a term which references a collection of peoples of more than 500 different language groups on the African continent) (Nkulu-N'Sengha 2014).

<sup>11</sup> The elusive nature of the term *Ubuntu* is regularly noted in the literature and it is recognised that there are a plethora of meanings attributed to this one term (Eliastam 2015; Gade 2011; Hailey 2008; Praeg 2014).

<sup>12</sup> For equivalent terms in multiple languages see Hailey (2008, p. 3).

<sup>13</sup> The term “concept” here is used in its broadest sense, acknowledging that *Búmùntù* is understood to represent a “set of common characteristics,” just as it represents a “paradigm,” a “world view system,” a “theological concept” and even a “cosmology.”

is to recognise the sacredness and inviolable dignity of other human beings (Nkulu N'Sengha 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2008, 2011). Framed in another condensed form through the statement: "*Kwikala I (Kwikala biya ne) Bantu*" ("to be" is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings), it appears to place peace (expressed more often as social harmony) as the defining characteristic of our humanness (Nkulu N'Sengha 2002, p. 157).<sup>14</sup> The concept *Búmùntù* thus engages with the "ontological" in the sense that it refers to a "mode of being-in-the-world," which involves "the most basic framing categories of social existence: temporality, spatiality, corporeality, epistemology, and so on" (James 2006, p. 324).

With the struggle for peace in the DRC as my central concern, it is this concept and the disjuncture it seems to represent in the context of a nation notorious for a seemingly interminable history of violence, which will guide this work.

In the last two decades, as stories of the horrific violence of the Congo wars of the 1990s and the conflicts that have continued to smoulder in their aftermath have sluggishly crept onto the back pages of newspapers around the globe, the image of a perennial "heart of darkness" has been affirmed and reaffirmed (Ndangam 2002).<sup>15</sup> Ascending from the pits of this apparent "hell on earth,"<sup>16</sup> these reports have emphasised the particular savagery and barbarism of the forms of violence being perpetrated on Congolese soil. One can find many accounts of cannibalism, auto-cannibalism and particularly those aspects of "the war on women," rape and the mutilation of the female sex organs. On the one hand, these are all accounts which were well-documented in reports of victims' testimony and deserved much greater international attention than they received (Amnesty International 2008; Clifford et al. 2008; Human Rights Watch 2002; Omanyondo Ohambe, Bahananga Muhigwa & Mulyumba Wa Mamba 2005; Ward, J et al. 2007).<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, deeply problematic has been

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<sup>14</sup> This ontological statement is derived from the deconstruction of the Luba proverb: "*Bwino bonso ke Bwino, Bwino I kwikala ne Bantu*" (All knowledge is not knowledge, the only true knowledge is to know how to live in harmony with our fellow human beings) (Nkulu N'Sengha 2002, p. 157).

<sup>15</sup> Ndangam (2002) analyses the way in which the "heart of darkness" metaphor was used in the British press coverage of the conflict in DRC between October – December 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Like "heart of darkness," "hell" is an ongoing theme in the media reportage. News headlines include "The Democratic Republic of the Congo where hell is just a local call away" (Snow 2013); "Hell on Earth; John le Carré on Congo" (Le Carré 2010) "How Congo's heaven became Congo's hell" (BBC News 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Concerning "the war on women" specifically, the Human Rights Watch (2002) report "War within a war" was the first to draw attention to the accounts of women on sexual violence.

the uneasy fascination with these most “grotesque” and “abhorrent” aspects of the wars, accompanied by adjectives such as those mentioned earlier, describing these acts as “unimaginable,” “incomprehensible” and “insensate.”<sup>18</sup> In many of these stories, the lack of analysis of the immense political complexities, the historical context, and particularly, the global dimension of the conflicts, in favour of the image of a primitive chaos has led to substantial criticism (Autesserre 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014; Dunn 2003; Eriksson Baaz & Stern 2010; Mertens 2017). Considering specifically the international peace-building effort during Congo’s transition from ‘war to peace’ (2003-2006), Autesserre (2010) writes of a widespread view amongst international actors that Congo was “inherently” violent (p. 74-81) and that the ongoing violence in the east of the country was not seen as evidence that war was continuing, but instead was viewed as a “normal feature of a peaceful Congo” (p. 67).

Such views are not limited to the contemporary period; ever since its formation as the Congo Free State (1885 to 1908) under King Leopold II of Belgium, the Congo has been imagined as a site of savagery, barbarity and extreme violence, embodying the primal heart of the dark continent of Africa (Dunn 2003). The “idea of Africa” itself, as Mudimbe (1988) has argued, has been a space on which the Western imagination has created and re-created its own image by differentiating itself from “the Other.”<sup>19</sup> This points to what has been argued as a defining struggle of (modern) Western<sup>20</sup> philosophical and political traditions, that is “the theoretical and practical recognition of the body and flesh of ‘the stranger’ as flesh and body just like mine, the idea of a common human nature, a humanity shared with others” (Mbembe 2001, p. 2). That this struggle, and its resultant questioning or scepticism regarding the humanity of “the Other,” appear as foundations of colonialism and imperialism and thus the justification for the formation of the Congo Free State, is worthy of reflection. Through such a reflection, an even more palpable disjuncture between *Búmùntù* and the

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<sup>18</sup> These terms are taken from a press conference statement of Lewis (2007) calling for a new UN initiative to end sexual violence in eastern DRC, the term ‘brutal’ is used 7 times in his statement.

<sup>19</sup> The phenomenon of “the Other” in the history of Western consciousness and the development of Western “self-image” was earlier explored by Said (1978) in “Orientalism.” For other scholars who have described this in relation to Africa see Comaroff & Comaroff (1991, 1997) and Mbembe (2001).

<sup>20</sup> The term “Western” in this thesis refers more specifically to the underlying structure of Western civilisation as articulated by Mignolo (2011, p. xviii); the colonial matrix of power of which “the rhetoric of modernity” and the “logic of coloniality” are its two sides. This will be explored in more detail in *Chapter One: The Birth (and Death) of ‘Man.’*

ontological formation/s<sup>21</sup> that have underpinned the creation of the DRC as a modern nation-state may become apparent.

This leads me to a central contention of this work; that the struggle for peace in the DRC, occurs in the context of a contemporary global landscape intimately bound up in enduring legacies of colonialism and imperialism. Stoler's (2016, p. 7) term "duress" captures the "hardened, tenacious qualities of colonial effects; their extended protracted temporalities; and, not least, their durable, if sometimes intangible constraints and confinements." Whilst the metaphor of "*restless and unatoned bones*" in the title of this work began as a reference to the enduring effects of direct forms of colonial violence as evidenced in cycles of protracted violence and its amassment of corpses and scars (both physical and psychological, both individual and collective), over the course of the research I have delved deeper yet to include the enduring effects of colonialism more broadly. Specifically, this has included the enduring effects of that aforementioned "defining" struggle to recognise the "body and flesh of 'the stranger' as flesh and body just like mine" (Mbembe 2001, p. 2) — expressed in this thesis as an "*enduring struggle*," resulting in a more fundamental "ontological violence" which has subtly and not so subtly permeated outwards into institutions, laws, policies, practices, discourses and more, in turn justifying both direct and indirect forms of violence. As a central theme in this thesis, the notion of "ontological violence" will carry two concurrent meanings; firstly, in a broader sense, I will use it to refer to the denigration, suppression, marginalisation and oppression of modes of "being-in-the-world" which touch on those basic framing categories of social existence, forms of violence which inhibit the ability of people "to be" within their own worlds. Secondly, and in a more directed sense given the specific focus of this thesis, I will use it to refer to that aforementioned scepticism regarding the humanity of "the Other," a scepticism which has brought into question the ontological status of that "Other." Beyond the amassment of corpses and scars, then, such "*restless and unatoned bones*" are evidenced in the persistence of colonial narratives of the "savagery" and "inherent" violence of Congolese in dominant representations and understandings of violence; in the continued Eurocentric bias in dominant peace

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<sup>21</sup> Again, I use the definition of "ontological formation" from James (2006, pp. 323-324) as that which describes a "set of social relations in terms of its dominant categories of temporality, spatiality, corporeality and epistemology."

interventions and strategies promoted by leading states, leading international organisations and international financial institutions; and in the continued subjugation of alternative knowledges, alternative ways of being and thus also of alternative mechanisms for establishing and sustaining peace.

A consequence of this, in the struggle for peace in the DRC, is that a dominant narrative has emerged of the DRC as an "Hobbesian chaos" (Autesserre 2009; Beneduce et al. 2006). Bolstered by the tenacity of colonial imagery of a "heart of darkness," it has been argued that this narrative has contributed to what has been a fundamentally flawed international peacebuilding response (Autesserre 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014).<sup>22</sup> In turn, I argue that the international peace-building effort in the DRC can provide a powerful case for the argument that pessimism on humanness more broadly, exaggerated by an even deeper pessimism on African humanness, has reduced both curiosity in exploring the roots of violence and creativity in responding to it (de Zulueta 2006).<sup>23</sup>

As Asante writes, however, "once we are no longer accepting as legitimate a particular direction, scheme, or plan, we can consider the possibility of an alternative or many alternatives" (Monteiro-Ferreira 2014, p. ix). Fortunately, the significant contributions of feminist, Indigenous, postcolonial and de/colonial<sup>24</sup> scholars in drawing attention to the fundamentally dehumanizing forces, logics, and discourses underlying colonialism and imperialism and resisting their continued hold in the form of imperial duress, are gradually but powerfully coming into effect. Gaining momentum during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the "decolonial turn" has resulted in profound shifts in ways of thinking and doing (Maldonado-Torres 2006, 2008, 2017; Mignolo & Escobar 2010). Increasingly, the argument

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<sup>22</sup> In this thesis, I have primarily referred to Autesserre as she has directly explored the tenacity of colonial narratives and their impact on dominant understandings and responses to violence in the DRC; however, her argument sits within the context of a more widespread criticism of the international peacebuilding effort in the DRC. See for example Marriage (2013), Sundstøl Eriksen (2009) and Tull (2009, 2018). Also relevant to an exploration of the tenacity of colonial narratives is the work of Mertens (2017) who presents evidence of their ongoing presence in contemporary discourses around sexual violence in the DRC and the international response to this.

<sup>23</sup> In fact, de Zulueta (2006) argues that a pessimistic trend on "humanness" more broadly has negatively impacted the study of human violence. I extend this argument further in the context of narratives around "humanness" in the "dark continent" of Africa.

<sup>24</sup> Drawing from Bhattacharya (2009), I will use the term de/colonial in this thesis in recognition of a symbiotic relationship between colonizing discourses and the resistance against such discourses whereby it is impossible to detach one from the other.

for the “monoculture of scientific knowledge” to be replaced by an “ecology of knowledges” has been heard (de Sousa Santos 2014).

This returns us to the central concept of *Búmùntù* and the ultimate purpose of this work. This thesis is an intervention in the dominant discourses on humanness, violence and peace in the DRC. It seeks to move beyond analyses of violence and peace positioned firmly within Eurocentric paradigms and ways of knowing and instead attempts to engage in an exercise of border thinking, the “epistemology of the exteriority; that is of the outside created from the inside”(Mignolo & Tlostanova 2006, p. 206). First articulated by Anzaldúa (1999), and extended upon by Mignolo (2000), border thinking refers to the use of alternative knowledge traditions which have existed at the borders of a modern/colonial world system, characterised by a territorial and imperial foundation of knowledge. Importantly, such alternative traditions are understood to exist not irrespective to but in response to or in struggle against that modern foundation of knowledge and its exclusivist tendencies. *Búmùntù*, with its assertion of the sacredness and inviolable dignity of human beings and its obligation to live in harmony with others represents one such example of this.

I did not begin this work with a focus on *Búmùntù*; instead, it arose relationally through dialogue with a good friend and mentor, Clovis Mwamba, during the early stages of my candidature. In time, these dialogues led me to connect with Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha, an Associate Professor at the University of California, who appeared as the lone figure in my initial online searches for academic literature on *Búmùntù* and its application in the DRC (Nkulu N’Sengha 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2008, 2011). It was in grace of his support that I found myself travelling to Kamina, capital of the Haut-Lomami Province of DRC, spending 6 months conducting field research (a preliminary field trip of one month in 2014 and a secondary field trip of five months in 2015), to engage in a dialogue with individuals and communities in and around Kamina on *Búmùntù*, in search of a better understanding of the place and meaning of peace associated with this concept, and in search of a better understanding of the struggle for such a peace in a contemporary landscape. It is this dialogue which forms the main contribution of this thesis.

In order to establish the context and rationale, the journey begins with *Part One: Tracing the History of an Enduring Struggle*. This part comprises three chapters which together establish a primary research “problem.” *Chapter One: The Birth (and Death) of “Man”* and *Chapter Two: The Death (and Resurrection) of the “Person”* begin by drawing attention to an “enduring struggle” within (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions to see the “Other” as fully human, its consequence in an ontological violence which has rippled out towards other forms of violence, and the counter struggle against such forms of violence — and to be seen as fully human. *Chapter Three: Finding Peace Amongst Restless and Unatoned Bones* moves towards a scoping of the influence of such an *enduring struggle* in the contemporary landscape, particularly its visibility in dominant narratives of humanness, violence, and peace in the DRC. Acknowledging the hindrance that the dominant narratives pose to the struggle for peace, *Chapter Three* points towards a wealth of literature across a wide range of disciplines contesting such narratives, opening up spaces for alternative ways of thinking about humanness, violence and peace in the DRC. A dialogue on *Búmùntù* and the contemporary struggle for peace is offered as one such opening.

As Haraway (2016, p. 35) writes “it matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledge knows knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations. It matters what worlds world worlds. It matters what stories tell stories.” My engagement thus, with the concept of *Búmùntù* at the centre of this study, and my invitation to allow those *restless and unatoned bones* to speak, led me to make choices about methodology that depart somewhat from what might be considered a conventional doctoral thesis. It is in *Part Two: In Search of Mwendelo Muyampe — A Good Way of Walking on the Road of Life* where I articulate my own process as I have attempted to find a “good way of walking.” This is comprised of *Chapter Four: A Dialogue on Búmùntù as an Exercise in Border Thinking* which articulates the epistemological underpinnings of this work, and *Chapter Five: Mwendelo Muyampe Alongside the Art of Débrouillardise* which describes how this research has unfolded.

Finally, this leads to *Part Three: An Assemblage of Relational and Dialogical Encounters*. It is here that through a genesis account of a bolide exploding in a shower of rainbow hue, a moment of transition is established which signifies an invitation to “arrive” in Kamina and engage not only in a physical landscape or a social landscape, but also an ontological

landscape in all its complexities and contradictions. It is here that the voices of the many individuals and communities who contributed to our dialogues will be shared and their experiences of *Búmùntù* and the struggle for peace will be explored. This will lead to a consideration of the implications of our enhanced understanding of *Búmùntù* and its relevance as a productive peace enhancing and maintaining concept in a contemporary and future landscape.

The task of *Finding Peace Amongst Restless and Unatoned Bones* in this work, therefore, refers equally to the need to unpack the ongoing influence of that *enduring struggle* on dominant narratives on humanness, violence and peace in the DRC and, in turn, destabilise the power of such narratives, just as it refers to the need to consider its enduring influence on the local ontological landscape in which the struggle for peace is enacted today.

Far from the image of violence being a 'normal' state even in a peaceful Congo, a dialogue on *Búmùntù* offers a humanising narrative of violence and peace in the DRC. It points to the existence of rich traditions of peace; the presence of a rich language for articulating the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being; and the agency of local actors who continue to utilise local concepts, such as *Búmùntù*, to resist and condemn violence and to promote and restore peace. It points also to the many paradoxes and exceptions associated with this concept: the way in which individuals, families, communities and Luba society as a whole have enacted and continue to enact the complex struggle for peace in a multitude of ways according to the exigencies of each moment in time and space; and the way in which, as a result, the concept of *Búmùntù* can be used to both condone and condemn violence. It points to the devastating impact of violence and its ripple effects; to the destruction and loss of local ontologies and hence local mechanisms of maintaining peace; and to the immense challenges associated with enacting *Búmùntù* today given the profound metamorphosis that has occurred through both resistance against and receptivity to those exogenous influences shaping the contemporary landscape over the last century or so. Finally, and most importantly, however, a dialogue on *Búmùntù* points us to an onus: that "to be is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings;" accordingly, the struggle for peace is viewed as a necessity if we are to attain our humanity. In stark contrast to dominant narratives on violence in the DRC, which I argue have reduced curiosity in exploring the roots of violence

and creativity in responding to it, a dialogue on *Búmùntù* obliges us to be curious, to be creative, and to become “authentically” human.

## PART ONE: TRACING THE HISTORY OF AN ENDURING STRUGGLE

“How do colonial histories matter in the world today?” This is a question posed by Stoler (2016, p. 1) in the opening of her book titled: “*Duress: Imperial Durabilities in our Times.*” It is the response to this question which forms the substance of her book, beginning with the premise that the aetiologies of the many issues we are today confronted with are very much steeped in the colonial histories of which they have been and continue to be a part. Moving beyond the more tangible, Stoler (2016, p. 5) emphasises the point that the connectivities joining colonial pasts to postcolonial presents are “sometimes so ineffably threaded through the fabric of contemporary life forms they seem indiscernible as distinct effects, as if everywhere and nowhere at all.” Nevertheless, she critiques the language of “traces,” arguing that it can reduce colonial remnants as “faint scents of the past” when more often they are “enduring fissures.” The term “*duress*,” encountered in the above introduction, seeks to remedy this, drawing to the fore the “hardened, tenacious qualities of colonial effects; their extended protracted temporalities; and, not least, their durable, if sometimes intangible constraints and confinements” (Stoler 2016, p. 7). Importantly, “*endurance*” features here also in the capacity to “hold out” and “last” in the face of such “*duress*” and its deleterious nature (Stoler 2016, p. 7). In the following three chapters, together forming *Part One: Tracing the History of an Enduring Struggle*, the themes of *duress* and *endurance* will resonate. Like Stoler’s, this work is less concerned with “scenes of high-pitched drama” but more so with that which is borne at “lower frequencies” (Stoler 2016, p. 8). Whilst then, the chapters also offer a brief history of violence in the DRC, of conquests, mass atrocities, assassinations and wars, these more tangible forms of violence are examined in the context of the more intangible and ineffable “*enduring struggle*” and the fundamental ontological violence which has been enacted as part of this. In this case, the “*enduring struggle*” that the following three chapters seek to trace, serves both as a reference to the enduring nature of that “defining struggle” to see the “Other” as human, its *duress* embodied in the contemporary global landscape, but equally to the enduring capacity of peoples and cultures “to endure,” to “hold out” and to “last” in the face of such *duress*.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE BIRTH (AND DEATH) OF 'MAN'<sup>25</sup>

*No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it — this suspicion of their not being inhuman. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces' but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity — like yours — the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar.*

*Joseph Conrad (1995, p. 62)*

The Democratic Republic of Congo is the terrain on which the pen of an imagined Charles Marlow in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century wrote the above statement of epiphany. Although a fictional moment from Joseph Conrad's acclaimed novella *Heart of Darkness*, the astonishment with which his realisation is made and his lingering scepticism in the framing of this litotes, powerfully captures a scepticism regarding the humanity of the African Person which was far from restricted to the realm of fiction. Instead, Marlow, who is widely recognised as an alter-ego of Joseph Conrad himself, powerfully captures that "defining struggle" of (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions earlier identified; "the theoretical and practical recognition of the body and flesh of 'the stranger' as flesh and body just like mine" (Mbembe 2001, p. 2). In this chapter, I locate this moment of epiphany from Marlow and the philosophical struggle I suggest it represents in its context, exploring its philosophical antecedents and the specific place Africa has occupied in its evolution. Based on the recognition of such a struggle, the chapter then moves to explore a history of the formation of today's DRC as the Congo Free State, drawing the relationship between these philosophical discourses and the immense violence characteristic of that time period. In doing so, the chapter establishes the powerful and inextricable relationship between the primary themes of the thesis: humanness, violence, peace and, importantly, knowledge itself.

I will begin with Descartes' '*Cogito ergo sum*' (*I think, therefore, I am*) as just one influential moment which, like a stone in a still surface of water, has rippled outwards to have profound

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<sup>25</sup> My use of the gendered term "man" is intentional and deliberately alludes to the invisibility of women in the philosophical discourses of the time period that is the subject of this chapter.

implications on the pattern of philosophical thinking referred to in this chapter: the belief in 'reason' as the defining characteristic of human beings and of being human. Whilst this belief stretches back to the pre-Socratic period and is found in varying forms across the great philosophers of antiquity (Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle), it was through Descartes, the "*Father of Modern Philosophy*," that modern (or epistemological) rationalism was born. Although largely silent on matters of race (Valls 2005, p. 17), it was Descartes who laid the foundations for the "absolutization of a disembodied reason," making possible the more deleterious thinking which was to come (Nkulu N'Sengha 2002).<sup>26</sup> Through thinkers such as John Locke, Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the connection between rationality and the Enlightenment project began to more fully reveal its "exclusivist, ethnocentric, sexist and racist strains" (Mabogo 1996, p. 112; Nkulu N'Sengha 2002). In turn, this led towards the height of the biological revolution in the nineteenth century which produced taxonomies of race and the "well-known evolutionary hallucination" of world history, classifying beings and societies according to their position on an ascending path from savagery to commercial societies (Mudimbe 1988, p. 6).

There are numerous ways of formulating the particular trajectory resulting in nineteenth century racism (Valls 2005). One argument offered by Maldonado-Torres (2007) is that what was born in the sixteenth century was an attitude of permanent suspicion. Expressed in a fuller form of the *cogito ergo sum* as *dubito, ergo cogito, ergo sum* (I doubt, therefore I think, therefore I am), this suspicion was applied to the world in order to assess it from a fresh perspective, thus assisting to usher in the Age of Enlightenment and the immense scientific and technological progress named '*Modernity*.' However, like all philosophical movements, Cartesian methodical scepticism did not offer a "completely" fresh perspective at all. Extending Dussel's argument, Maldonado-Torres posits that its significance and its implications for European (modern) identity must be understood in the context of an already established *ego conquiro*, the notion of oneself as a conqueror. The more deleterious side to this permanent suspicion is thus articulated as a "racist/imperial Manichean misanthropic scepticism," which, rather than being questioned by Cartesian methodical scepticism, became constitutive of it. Such a form of misanthropic scepticism doubts the most obvious,

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<sup>26</sup> Nkulu N'Sengha (2002, p. 142) specifically describes the impact of the "absolutization of a disembodied reason" on human rights discourse.

being a form of questioning the very humanity of colonised people, turning a statement like: “you are a human” into the form of a cynical question: “Are you completely human?” (Maldonado-Torres 2007, p. 246). According to this argument, this misanthropic scepticism — “like a worm at the very heart of modernity” (Maldonado-Torres 2007, p. 246), contributed to the shaping of Cartesian scepticism, where the foundational division between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* (consciousness and matter) translated into dichotomies of mind/body and human/nature, followed — one may even say built upon — the existing anthropological difference between the coloniser and the colonised. The mind/body and human/nature dichotomies, in turn, became used as models for the evolving understanding of the coloniser/colonised relationship. Voicing the silences hidden behind the Cartesian formulation and its actual philosophical and historical application, Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 252) suggests a more complex reformulation: “I think (others do not think, or do not think properly), therefore I am (others are-not, lack being, should not exist or are dispensable).” This reformulation captures the idea of the “colonial difference,” which Mignolo (2002) has proposed is at the centre of the formation of the modern/colonial world system: the birth (through death) of “man,” to which the title of this chapter refers, is an ontological violence through which modern “imperial” man has been created through and at the expense of the differentiated “Other” (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991, 1997; Mbembe 2001; Mudimbe 1988).

Whilst such philosophical discourses had a profound impact in laying the foundations for the project of colonisation throughout the globe, it has been argued that Africa has been a space on which “absolute otherness has been taken farthest” (Mbembe 2001, p. 2). As Mbembe (2001, p. 2) writes: “it is now widely acknowledged that Africa as an idea, a concept, has historically served, and continues to serve, as a polemical argument for the West’s desperate desire to assert its difference from the rest of the world.” The history of the formation of today’s DRC as the Congo Free State itself provides a particularly striking example of the way in which this birth (through death) of ‘man’ has resulted in immense violence.

In September 1876, King Leopold II of Belgium convened the Brussels International Geographical Conference. Concealing his colonial enterprise under the guise of humanitarian venture and scientific enquiry, this conference brought together business entrepreneurs, geographers and physicians to establish the Association Internationale Africaine (AIA), an

association whose declared objectives were the scientific study of Africa and the ending of the slave trade (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). In reality, Leopold wanted nothing more than to carve out “a slice of this magnificent African cake” (cited in Ewans 2003, p. 168).<sup>27</sup> Indeed, according to Young (2012, p. 397), “he was obsessed with the notion that only a colony could secure Belgian national identity.” Following the Brussels conference, he created another organisation, the Association Internationale du Congo (AIC), a name deliberately similar to the AIA to obscure the reality that this was a Belgian operation entirely under his control (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007).<sup>28</sup> With great diplomatic skill, Leopold used this organisation to support the Welsh-American explorer Henry Morton Stanley’s expedition to Central Africa, which established the infrastructure of empire he needed to justify his claims to the land and resources of the Congo basin. As well as establishing administrative and trading stations along the Congo River, Stanley also “negotiated” more than 450 treaties with local Chiefs, who, by placing a thumb mark on a piece of paper, unknowingly signed over their land to Leopold for next to nothing. As Hochschild writes:

Did the chiefs of Ngombi and Mafela, for example, have any idea of what they agreed to on April 1, 1884? In return for “one piece of cloth per month to each of the undersigned chiefs, besides present of cloth in hand,” they promised to “freely of their own accord, for themselves and their heirs and successors for ever ... give up to the said Association the sovereignty and all sovereign and governing rights to all their territories ... and to assist by labour or otherwise, any works, improvements or expeditions which the said Association shall cause at any time to be carried out in any part of these territories... (Hochschild 1998, p. 72).

By the time the Berlin West African Conference, a defining moment in the *Scramble for Africa*, was held from November 1884 to February 1885, Leopold had already succeeded in obtaining, through bilateral treaties, the recognition of his sovereignty in the Congo by all the necessary major powers. Importantly, it was his positioning as King of the small and less

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<sup>27</sup> The full statement: “I do not want to miss a good chance of getting us a slice of this magnificent African cake,” is found in a letter from King Leopold II to Baron Solvyns, dated 17 November 1877 cited by Ewans (2003, p. 168).

<sup>28</sup> This association was first established under the name Comité d’études du Haut-Congo (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007).

powerful country of Belgium that contributed to his success; preferable to ceding this resource-rich territory to another major power, King Leopold II's rule made it possible to establish the Congo basin as a free-trade zone, open to traders from all over Europe. The announcement of his recognition on May 29, 1885 and the strong endorsement by the Berlin Conference paved the way for Leopold to claim — what he named — the *Etat Indépendent du Congo* (Congo Free State), an area seventy-six times the size of Belgium, as his own personal fiefdom. The absence of Congolese or even African voices at this Conference is indicative of its significance in cementing the arrogant belief that “European powers had the right to annex African territory for their own advantage” (Slade cited in Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007, p. 19).

The subsequent story of the mass atrocities committed during the Congo Free State period (1885 to 1908) has received substantial attention and investigation (Dunn 2003; Ewans 2003; Hochschild 1998; Konczacki 1985; Likaka 2009; Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007; Roes 2010). Having obtained his “slice of this magnificent African cake”(cited in Ewans 2003, p. 168), Leopold quickly dissolved both the AIA and the AIC as they had already served their purpose (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). This “civilising crusade” which aimed, in Leopold's own words, to “open to civilisation the only part of our globe which it has not yet penetrated — to pierce the darkness which hangs over entire peoples” (Banning cited in Dunn 2003, p. 21) had at its foundation rampant capitalist objectives. According to Stengers, Leopold owned the Congo just as John Rockefeller owned Standard Oil (cited in Nzongola-Ntalaja (2007)) and he was determined to make it a profitable enterprise. Due to the vast size of the territory, he established a concession system where “vacant lands” were divided in blocks and leased to concession companies in which he held shares. Through policies of forced labour as a form of taxation, which required Congolese to supply labour, rubber and ivory to state agents, the Congo Free State was able to finance its own affairs but also contributed to the economic development of Belgium. This involved the use of torture, murder and other inhumane methods, forcing the Congolese to do whatever the state required of them (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). In order to justify this, Leopold continued to maintain the humanitarian guise of his project as a fight against slavery, disease and ignorance.

In reality, far from ending slavery, agents of the Congo Free State were instead drawn into and exploited the pre-existing social and political dynamics, including Africa's expanding slave trading networks. Writing on the second half of the nineteenth century, Roes (2010, p. 655) presents the Congo Basin as a site of dramatic social change: "migrations and conquests; increased social stratification; disintegration of large political units and attempts by ambitious leaders to forge new ones; transformations in and intensification of slavery systems; a marked militarisation of societies; intensified competition for wealth and power; and changes in gender patterns." He describes the way in which Congo Free State agents established collaborative relations with dominant groups to solidify their power and control and to mobilise the labour the colonial regime required. The adoption of the Afro-Arab "sentry system," stationing armed state auxiliaries inside village communities, is one such example. These armed auxiliaries, like the colonial officials and state agents they answered to, were rewarded for the use of excessive force under an incentive system offering a percentage of the rubber and ivory market value on a sliding scale depending on how much was supplied. If a village or district refused or was unable to meet assigned quotas of production, villagers were punished by rape, arson, bodily mutilation and murder (Hochschild 1998; Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). A common practice emerged of sentries severing the hands and/or feet of murdered villagers to prove to State Agents that their bullets had been used to kill someone and had not been wasted or stored for their own purposes. According to Forbath (1977, p. 105), "the baskets of severed hands set down at the feet of European post commanders, became the symbol of the Congo Free State."

The "atrocities of epical proportions" (Likaka 2009, p. 35) of this period of Congolese history resulted in the loss of millions of lives from causes directly linked to the colonial project (Dunn 2003; Hochschild 1998; Roes 2010).<sup>29</sup> Leopold's holocaust was, in fact, so horrendous that a globe, largely convinced of and satisfied with the civilising ethic of colonial regimes, was spurred into the first international human rights movement of the twentieth century (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). George Washington Williams, an African American historian and journalist, returned from an 1890 expedition condemning what he characterised as "crimes against humanity." Another African American, the Presbyterian Rev. William Henry Sheppard

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<sup>29</sup> As noted earlier, whilst one of the more shocking estimates is approximately 10 million (Hochschild 1998) there is considerable debate about such figures (Dunn 2003; Roes 2010).

and his colleague William Morrison also offered their testimony to the suffering of the Congolese. As more eyewitness testimonials were collected, including those from the Irish nationalist Roger Casement, the basis of a movement was formed, eventually resulting in the creation of the Congo Reform Association (CRA) in 1904, led by the British shipping clerk Edmund Morel, which eventually succeeded in pressuring the major powers to end Leopold's brutal rule of the Congo Free State. In 1908, King Leopold II was obliged to hand over administration of the Congo Free State to Belgium, thus ushering in the Belgian Congo.

Like Mertens (2017), I would like to caution the emphasis often found in scholarship that Leopold's Congo Free State was somehow "unique" and exceptionally violent.<sup>30</sup> Certainly, there were distinctive features that made the Congo Free State "exceptional," its status as the personal fiefdom of an individual King is just one example. Nevertheless, as Mertens (2017) points out, the most disruptive aspects of Leopold's regime — revenue accumulation, economic exploitation through forced labour and the seizure of land — have been pervasive in other colonial encounters as well. Similarly, Nzongola-Ntalaja (2007) notes that the end of Leopold's Congo Free State did not represent a substantial change for Congolese and their struggle for freedom and self-determination. Instead, it is argued that through a "colonial trinity" of state, church and industry, the triple mission of "political repression," "economic exploitation" and "cultural oppression" initiated by King Leopold II very much continued in the Belgian Congo (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). Rather than viewing the violence of the Congo Free State as the product of a uniquely evil despot, it is important to recognise the aforementioned defining struggle as the foundation upon which such gross atrocities and abuse were made possible. Just as the "civilizing frame" was used to justify the colonisation of the Congo, it was also used to justify all forms of violence to the "native's" body or property (Mertens 2017). According to Viaene (2008), even missionaries, the most "humanitarian" of colonisers, defended forced labour as a necessary method of "civilizing" the "lower races." The justification of force, accordingly, implied the justification of violence, the slogans of colonial propaganda depicting this as a regrettable but necessary force "without brutality," and a regrettable but necessary violence "without cruelty" (Haulleville cited in Viaene (2008).) As Viaene (2008, p. 787) writes: "According to *Le Congo Belge*, the

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<sup>30</sup> This theme can be seen in for example Ewans (2002, 2003), Hochschild (1998), and Renton, Seddon & Zeilig (2007).

death of a few hundred thousand Africans was not too heavy a price to pay for the “pacification” of a continent. It was even “an immense saving” in comparison with the human cost of the slave trade and tribal warfare.”<sup>31</sup>

This returns me to the statement of epiphany opening this chapter; it is significant that Conrad’s acclaimed novella *Heart of Darkness* was based on his own disillusionment with the colonial encounter as he travelled to the Congo Free State only to be haunted by what he witnessed. Whilst I earlier concentrated on the astonishment with which the moment of epiphany occurs as an indication of the more widespread scepticism on the humanity of the African Person, it is important too that Marlow’s voice, recognising that “they” (the natives) were not inhuman, was used to mount an anti-colonial critique. It has thus been considered a powerful “exposé of imperialist rapacity and violence,” raising important questions about imperialism and colonialism (Raskin 1967; Watts 1983). Although not directly associated with the organised actions of the Congo Reform Association, it was seen as giving momentum to that movement and contributing to its eventual success in bringing an end to the Congo Free State (Hawkins 1981-1982). Deeply problematic and significant for our exploration of an *enduring struggle*, however, is that this apparently anti-imperial “masterpiece” is, in fact, deeply dehumanising. As argued by Parry (1983), Conrad unequally subverts white-and-black, light-and-dark dichotomies of racist fantasy, so that the “resonances of white are rendered discordant,” whilst “black and dark do serve in the text as equivalences for the savage and unredeemed, the corrupt and degraded... the cruel and atrocious” (Brantlinger 1985, p. 371). The “darkness” and “savagery” of the African was used to parallel the moral bankruptcy of imperialism, which was seen to have awakened the “forgotten and brutal instincts” of civilised man, remembering that in that “well known evolutionary hallucination,” Africa represented the savage beginnings. In this sense, Conrad’s work, although critiquing the horrors of the Congo Free State, maintains the long tradition of the idea of Africa as a space upon which the Western imagination has created and re-created its own image. In a 1975 lecture titled *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness*, acclaimed Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe argues this point, famously criticising Conrad as a “thoroughgoing racist” and asserting his novel as epitomising the need of the West to “set

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<sup>31</sup> Viaene (2008, p. 787) cites specifically an article titled “Le droit à la colonisation” from 1897.

Africa up as a foil to Europe, as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar, in comparison with which Europe's own state of spiritual grace will be manifest" (Achebe 1977). In an interview, decades after his initial lecture, a powerful statement from Achebe sums up his ongoing position: "you cannot compromise my humanity in order that you explore your own ambiguity. I cannot accept that. My humanity is not to be debated, nor is it to be used simply to illustrate European problems" (Phillips, 2003).

That one is able to enact a deep violence and at the same time be a champion against violence is significant; that direct forms of violence can be overthrown, whilst subtler forms of violence at the ontological level continue to persist, is equally significant. More so, it leads me to a question that can be framed more broadly than the focus of this thesis: could not the earlier identified defining struggle of (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions represent an exaggerated form of an already existing struggle within those same traditions? After all, Conrad's tale is not just about an Imperial or an African "heart of darkness;" it is also a tale about a human "heart of darkness" and his representation of the ubiquitous violence of human nature is not unique. Indeed, according to Oksala: "the attempt to expose the ontological commitments underlying the tradition of Western political thought is a journey into the heart of darkness. Similar to the revelation of Joseph Conrad's most famous protagonist, the irreducible violence of "forgotten and brutal instincts" traverses our political imagination. ... Thinkers from Plato to Hobbes, Machiavelli, Sorel, Clausewitz, and Schmitt have built their understanding of the political on the recognition of the irreducibility of violence in human affairs"(Oksala 2012, p. 3).<sup>32</sup> According to de Zulueta (2006) this "pessimistic" trend which has long depicted human beings as having a natural inclination towards self-interest, competition and ultimately human destructiveness, has had quite a profound influence on the study of human violence, reducing both curiosity in exploring the

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<sup>32</sup> The British philosopher Thomas Hobbes, often considered a founder of modern political philosophy, is a particularly pertinent example of this apparent trend. Christened as the 'Monster of Malmbury' in his own day for his immensely unpopular mechanistic view of the universe, he is often remembered for his view of a "state of nature" as a state of anarchy with "every man, against every man." The cause offered for this state is the three essential functions of competition, diffidence and glory which are considered intrinsic to humans. The logical remedy, in turn, is that all citizens submit to an absolute sovereign to rule over them and maintain order and thus peace (Hobbes 2009). I refer here to popular readings of his work, however it is important to note that he may have been the victim of misrepresentation. Examples of literature that seek to rectify this image of Hobbes as the 'great maligner of human nature' include: Abizadeh (2011) and Voisset-Veysseyre (2010)

roots of violence and creativity in responding to it.<sup>33</sup> In *Chapter Three*, I will return to explore the DRC as a powerful case for such an argument.

For now, I conclude this chapter by returning to the moment of epiphany which opened it; the epiphany offered an entry point to exploring that defining struggle of (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions and thus, in turn, what I have described as the birth (through death) of “man,” the creation of modern “Imperial” man at the expense of the differentiated “Other.” Importantly, by employing such explicit language of births and deaths, I do not intend to affirm the triumph of that project; this will become increasingly clear in the following chapter, as tracing an “*enduring struggle*” moves away from the identification of that struggle towards an exploration of its *duress* and the *enduring* capacity of peoples and cultures in the face of *duress*. However, already the notion of *struggle* itself should be indicative of the many tensions both within and without, alluding to a multiplicity of perspectives that have been debated, a subject of contention, of discord and of strife. The purpose of this somewhat broad-brushed view of (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions is therefore not to overly essentialise, not to cast any particular philosophers as the villains of the postcolonial, nor to grant these traditions more power than they have. Instead, like the example of Conrad, whose anti-colonial yet still deeply dehumanising narrative was indicative of the pervasiveness of the ontological violence of that period, this chapter has hopefully drawn attention to the need to look beyond the more tangible forms of violence (such as direct, physical violence) to better understand just how deeply embedded violence might be. That Marlow’s realisation of a “remote kinship” between “civilized” man and “native man” is not through a shared humanity, but instead through a shared “brutal instinct” is indicative of its relevance when considering humanness, violence and peace today.

From one moment of epiphany to another, the next chapter will begin half a century later. This time, with a different kind of epiphany through the pen of Father Placide Tempels, a Franciscan Missionary who, like Conrad, had arrived in the Congo enthusiastic about the

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<sup>33</sup> Amongst other indications of a “pessimistic trend,” De Zulueta considers the legacy of the Augustinian doctrine of original sin. Her particular focus is on its influence in the psychoanalytic and social theories of the early part of the twentieth century, specifically in Freud’s theory of a ‘Death Instinct’ and the legacy of this today in the study of human violence (de Zulueta 2006, 2007).

colonial mission, but who would eventually find his own beliefs dramatically transformed when confronted by the reality. This will, in turn, shift us from this exploration of the birth (and death) of “man” to an exploration of the death (and resurrection) of the “Person.”

## CHAPTER TWO: THE DEATH (AND RESURRECTION) OF THE 'PERSON'

*This "discovery" of Bantu philosophy is so disconcerting a revelation that we are tempted at first sight to believe that we are looking at a mirage. In fact, the universally accepted picture of primitive man, of the savage, of the proto-man living before the full blossoming of intelligence, vanishes beyond hope of recovery before this testimony. On the contrary, as in the Biblical vision of the dead bones which came to life, re-assembled and took shape as man revived, we distinguish, vaguely at first but soon more clearly and at length plainly, the true primitive man whom we have misconceived.*

*Father Placide Tempels (1959, p. 73)*

These are the words of Father Placide Tempels, a Belgian Franciscan missionary working in the Belgian Congo between 1933 and 1962. The words are taken from his controversial 1945 work *Bantu Philosophy*, which ignited an animated debate and represented a defining moment in contemporary African philosophy. Like the moment of epiphany in the preceding chapter, one can witness a similar astonishment with which his realisation is made, the metaphor of the mirage — again — evidence of a lingering scepticism. Unlike the fictional Marlow, this epiphany is not of a “remote kinship” through the recognition of a shared “brutal instinct,” but of a shared humanity through the recognition of a system of philosophy amongst the “Bantu,” one which is derived “from a logically coherent ontology” (Tempels 1959, p. 10).<sup>34</sup> In the preceding chapter, I drew attention to Descartes’ “*Cogito ergo sum*” (I think, therefore, I am) and the belief in reason as the defining characteristic of human beings as one influential moment in the history of an *enduring struggle*. The subsequent exploration of that struggle identified Africa as an imagined landscape on which a *birth (and death) of “man”* has been enacted. One can now hear the echoes of this in Tempels’ work in his statement: “anyone who claims that primitive peoples possess no system of thought, excludes them thereby from the category of men” (Tempels 1959, p. 10). In order to

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<sup>34</sup> Tempels’ use of the term “ontology” refers to a “concrete conception of being and of the universe,” the groundwork upon which the *Muntu* (human being) founds his life upon and which includes “his whole mental life” and supplies him with a “complete solution to the problem of living” (Tempels 1959, p. 12).

continue our tracing of the history of an *enduring struggle*, this chapter will take Tempels' work to mark one moment in the very gradual but immensely significant shifting of attitudes. Although not the first to initiate contemporary African philosophy as a systematic endeavour,<sup>35</sup> nor the most accurate articulation of African philosophies,<sup>36</sup> both the contributions and controversies of Tempels' work are particularly significant for the purposes of this thesis for a number of reasons. Firstly, it arose primarily through an engagement with the Luba peoples in and around the diocese of Kamina, the same cultural context within which the latter part of this thesis is situated. Secondly, it was Tempels who brought *Bantu Philosophy* into dialogue with (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions and their *enduring struggle*. His work, therefore, can be understood as an early testimony to the reality of an "ontological violence" which, as noted earlier, refers in this thesis both to that scepticism which has brought into question the ontological status of that "Other," but also the consequential denigration, suppression, marginalisation and oppression of alternative modes of "being-in-the-world." Importantly, it was neither Tempels nor the fellow compatriots "missionaries, magistrates, administrators" his work sought to influence, who succeeded in taking his work to its logical conclusion. In this chapter, I place Tempels' work in the context of the growing momentum in the Congo itself, in Africa and across the globe more broadly, when continued resistance to colonialism and continued reclamation of their own voices and stories obliged a much more powerful shift in the history of that *enduring struggle* of (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions. This is the death (and

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<sup>35</sup> In fact, it was as early as 1907-1911 that Stefano Kaoze, originating from the Katanga province of the then Belgian Congo, inaugurated a basic method of African theology through his essay "*La psychologie des Bantus et quelques lettres*" (Nkulu N'Sengha 2002). It can be argued that Kaoze began the call for a genuine theological encounter between colonizers and colonized which Tempels extended. Like Tempels, he argued for the articulation of an African Philosophy which could be used as a foundation for theological discourse. As well, from the 1930s well before the publication of *Bantu Philosophy*, the Négritude movement had arisen in France. It was initiated by a collection of francophone African intellectuals, including Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, and Léopold Senghor, who, in turn, had been influenced by earlier movements such as the Haitian slave revolution and the Harlem Renaissance (Coetzee & Roux 2003; Rabaka 2015). Their work was a powerful contest to the denigration of African cultures and an even more powerful affirmation of the worth of African cultures and their equal standing amongst the cultures of the world. It was after Tempels, however, that the question of the existence of African Philosophy(ies), became a subject of great debate.

<sup>36</sup> There have been many criticisms of Tempels' "*Bantu Philosophy*," including concerns about his lack of methodological rigour and the inappropriate generalisation of his experiences with the Luba peoples of Katanga to the much broader category of "*Bantu*" and even "African" peoples. For an overview of such criticisms see Coetzee & Roux (2003). Later in this chapter I will turn to a collection of African philosophers who proceeded Tempels, including those who sought specifically to rectify Tempels' articulation of *Bantu Philosophy*. According to a number of academics that I spoke with in Kamina, such a task is ongoing.

resurrection) of the “Person” to which this chapter refers; the deleterious effects of that “ontological violence” as evidenced in the “death” of peoples, cultures, their languages and ontological landscapes, but also the continued resistance, resilience and, hence, “resurrection” in the face of such a violence.

Firstly, to set the context for Tempels’ controversial work, I would like to move from the Congo Free State of the previous chapter to the renamed, but not reinvented, Belgian Congo. As noted earlier, because of intense diplomatic pressure, King Leopold II was obliged to hand over administration of the Congo Free State to the state of Belgium in November 1908, marking the official beginning of the Belgian Congo. Unfortunately, whilst this change succeeded in appeasing public opinion in Europe and North America, it did not represent a substantial change for the Congolese (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). Indeed, according to Vanthemsche (2012, p. 26), the way in which the new Belgian Congo addressed its notorious forbearer was via a “programme of collective amnesia.” Whilst Belgian officials initially admitted to numerous abuses of Leopold’s reign, over time, the history of these abuses was watered down and the arguments originally used by the King to justify his management of the Congo Free State eventually became the official Belgian position (Vanthemsche 2012). No doubt, this was aided by the burning of many of the records in the Congo Free State archives ordered by Leopold prior to the handover (Hochschild 1998). Notwithstanding this “programme of collective amnesia,” the Belgian Congo was largely informed by the foundations laid before it. According to Anstey:

Belgium inherited not only a colony, but a colony possessed of a certain structure. The elements of that structure were a sparse population and a battered customary society; a vast territory which had not been properly administered; a system of direct economic exploitation, or an unfettered variant of the concessionaire system, and, as a consequence at a further remove, abuse and atrocity. Thirdly, the fact that the Congo was a legacy meant that Belgium had no relevant tradition of policy to invoke, no positive aims regarding it (Anstey 1966, p. 261).

This perspective, according to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2007), refutes the allusion found elsewhere to a clear end to the atrocities of the Congo Free State. Instead, Anstey (1966) shows that the legacy of the Congo Free State established not only the frames of early conduct in the Belgian Congo but also the subsequent trends in Belgian colonial rule. As a result, whilst numerous changes to the exercise of state power occurred, “coercion and systematic violence were never purged from a colonial system which cemented racial inequality, stifled African initiative and furthered the forceful integration of its subjects at the bottom tier of the economic system” (Roes 2010, p. 643).

This returns us to the notion of the “colonial trinity” of State, Church and Industry introduced in Chapter One, a notion which has been regularly invoked to articulate the colonial power structure of the Belgian Congo (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007; Turner 2007, 2013; Young 1965). Young (1965, p. 10) makes the claim that not only was this trinity a “virtually seamless web,” but each component was “without peer in tropical Africa in the magnitude of its impact.” Young and Turner (1985, p. 32) refer to the “*Bula Matari*”<sup>37</sup> (colonial) state as a “veritable leviathan” whose “assertion of hegemony was comprehensive.” Writing of its impact in comparison to other African colonial states, they offer the following: “...in its regulation of agriculture, particularly from the 1930s on; its energetic recruitment of labour for mines and plantations; its tight control over population movement, and intricate web of restrictions upon African subjects; its vigorous promotion of Christian (especially Catholic) evangelism: in all these respects the Belgian colonial behemoth stands out.” Importantly, whilst such depictions of the colonial power structure point to its vast power and influence, it is important to remain critical of the scope of such claims. Stanard (2018), for example, challenges the image of the all-powerful “*Bula Matari*” state, arguing that such an image has concealed the many fissures of a colonial system which by the 1950s was increasingly anxious about the limits of its control and the growing potential and actual unrest amongst the Congolese population.<sup>38</sup> In fact, the colonial propaganda of the 1950s relied on the image of

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<sup>37</sup> “*Bula Matari*” - meaning “breaker of rocks” - is a term dating back to the nineteenth century originally used to refer to the Welsh-American explorer Henry Morton Stanley, later applied to the Belgian colonial state.

<sup>38</sup> Boyle (1995) also problematises the conventional representation of the all-powerful and “seamless” Belgian colonial power structure alongside the conventional representation of a “chaotic” and “tumultuous” decolonisation process. His work explores the so-called “school wars” of the 1950s arguing that the

an all-powerful state to persuade many that the Belgian Congo was “orderly” and “peaceful,” in turn establishing an imagined stability from which Congo’s “tumultuous” and “chaotic” decolonisation would subsequently be viewed and interpreted (Stanard 2018). Like Nzongola-Ntalaja (2007), then, I suggest that an understanding of colonial power must go hand in hand with an understanding of the people’s resistance against that power. Far from the colonial propaganda of a “peaceful” and “stable” Belgian Congo, Nzongola-Ntalaja’s (2007) study of the history of the democracy movement from the 1950s onwards describes the ongoing quest of the Congolese for political freedom and economic prosperity in the face of “political repression”, “economic exploitation” and “cultural oppression,” the triple mission enacted by the “colonial trinity.” It is both an understanding of the immense power of the colonial-trinity, but also the powerful resistance against it that provides the context for Tempels’ work.

Tempels was one of many European missionaries<sup>39</sup> representing the third branch of the “colonial trinity” in the Belgian Congo. It was in 1933 that he was posted as a Franciscan missionary in the diocese of Kamina, then part of the Katanga province. In his own words, he arrived with a mission to “educate” and to “civilize” “children” (Tempels 1959, p. 74). In light of such a mission, his early work can be characterised as part of the conventional colonial “*mission civilisatrice*.” It was over time, however, that his perspective began to shift substantially, prompting him to write *Bantu Philosophy*. Importantly, and evident in the opening problematic of his work, such a shift was also a consequence of the emerging resistance and the gathering momentum of the independence movement. “Why is it,” he is heard asking, “that we see the “*évolués*,”<sup>40</sup> the “civilized”, even the Christians, return to their former ways of behaviour whenever they are overtaken by moral lassitude, danger or suffering?” (Tempels 1959, p. 9). Why have they “converted” or “civilized” only superficially? His answer, the contribution for which Tempels is most often named, refers to the existence of a *Bantu Philosophy*, which, he argued, the majority maintained even if “under a light

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struggles between State and Church over the control of education are indicative of a much weaker “alliance” of the “colonial trinity” than is often presumed.

<sup>39</sup> According to Young (1965) by the end of the colonial period the Catholics alone had an estimated 6,000 European missionaries stationed at 669 mission posts throughout the Belgian Congo.

<sup>40</sup> The term “*évolué*” (literally meaning evolved) was used to refer to a “native” who had, through European education, accepted European values and patterns of behaviour.

coating of white imitation" (Tempels 1959, p. 12). Rather than imagining themselves, then, as if "adults" standing before the "newly born," Tempels advocated that he and his fellow colonisers were really standing before "a sample of humanity, adult, aware of its own brand of wisdom and moulded by its own philosophy of life" (Tempels 1959, p. 74). In effect, Tempels saw this belief that they began with a "tabula rasa," as the main reason that efforts to "educate" and "civilise" were failing and he and his fellow colonisers were feeling "the soil slipping under our feet, that we are losing track of things; and why we are asking ourselves "what to do now to lead our coloured people?" (Tempels 1959, p. 74).

For Tempels, the damage inflicted by the colonisers' denial of the existence of a *Bantu* ontology was immense and was resulting in significant changes to the local ontological landscape and thus too, the identity of the *Bantu*. This view is powerfully expressed in the following statement: "It is contended that in condemning the whole gamut of their supposed "childish and savage customs" by the judgment "this is stupid and bad", we have taken our share of the responsibility for having killed "the man" in the *Bantu*" (Tempels 1959, p. 13). Here, Tempels drew a distinction between the stability of the 'pagan' and 'uncivilised,' who he professed, maintained a firm footing on his own "traditional groundwork of his theodicy and his ontology," and the instability of the "*évolué*" and the Christian who "has never effected a reconciliation between his new way of life and his former native philosophy" (Tempels 1959, p. 12). This instability, he argues, is due to "our" rejection of this philosophy, which was indeed "the characteristic feature which made the *Bantu* the man he was. It belonged to his essential nature. To abandon it amounts to intellectual suicide for him." This realisation lead Tempels to a rather dismal account of the contemporary scene after just sixty years of colonisation; "How many fully civilized persons, or true *évolués*, can we count among the natives of the Congo? Of *déracinés* (uprooted) and degenerates the number is legion. Of materialists who have lost their foothold in ancestral tradition without having grasped Western thought and philosophy there are not a few" (Tempels 1959, p. 12).

Of course, Tempels' judgement, clothed in language entirely infused with colonial sentiments, should be considered with caution. It is an account begging to be both contested and confirmed by local voices. Indeed, a contest has already been heard in his opening problematic where he alludes to the resistance and resilience of local ontologies rather than

a “death.” Nevertheless, despite these complexities and contradictions, Tempels’ statement is a profound confession; he appears entirely conscious of the impact of ontological violence on the collective identities of the Congolese. That he expresses this as a “killing” of “the man in the *Bantu*” would seem to be indicative of his sense of the potency of that impact. This is further enhanced when taken in the context of his own understanding and appreciation of Luba ontology.

In *Bantu Philosophy* itself, Tempels (1959) draws attention to both the innate dignity and the relational reality of the human being, two themes which are central to this thesis. He describes the “idea of excellence or plenitude” attached to the “*Muntu*,” a term which is directly translated as “man” or “human being” but, as he argues, is more appropriately translated as the “Person” (Tempels 1959, p. 27). This term, he claims, is said to signify “vital force endowed with intelligence and will” which can only be understood in light of the central value of the “vital force” possessed by all beings; human, animal, vegetable and inanimate in a complex hierarchy and which brings all beings into relation with God, the source of all “vital force” itself (Tempels 1959, p. 27). From his encounter, he believed that amongst the Luba all “created beings preserve a bond one with another, an intimate ontological relationship, comparable with the causal tie which binds creature and Creator” (Tempels 1959, p. 28), a bond so strong that “the world of forces is held like a spider's web of which no single thread can be caused to vibrate without shaking the whole network” (Tempels 1959, p. 29). He believed that the particular station of the “*Muntu*” in such a web, like God but in a much more restricted sense, was a “causal force of life,” in that the “*Muntu*” “sustains and adds to the life of the forces which he finds below him within his “ontological” hierarchy” (Tempels 1959, p. 47). Finally, and most strikingly, Tempels suggested that the power to influence (either strengthening or diminishing) the “vital force” of another extends beyond the physical realm of actions, to the psychological realms of thought and “will;” this is to say that a man may have a “life giving will” or a “destroying will.” Such a “destroying will,” he asserted, is known as “*bufwisi*” (witchcraft) and is considered the greatest evil in Luba society; that “all enmity, hatred, envy, jealousy, evil speaking, even false praise or lying eulogy, are severely condemned by the *Bantu*. To anyone who allows his envy or hatred to rise, the reproach is addressed “Do you want to kill me? Have you *bufwisi* or *buloji* (witchcraft or sorcery) in your heart?” (Tempels 1959, p. 59).

Whilst not suggesting that Tempels' own lens was so deeply shaken by his association with the Luba that his confession should be interpreted exclusively through this lens, I do suggest that one cannot ignore the particular potency of his confession in light of his own articulation of *Bantu Philosophy*. Indeed, his confession is striking in light of the "idea of excellence or plenitude" attached to the *Muntu*, who like God, was a "causal force of life." Even more so, is the use of the verb "to kill;" according to Tempels himself, the terms in Kiluba which signify "death" or "killing" are not easily translatable in European languages; they do not merely reference the physical death of the body but can as well signify the progressive diminution of "vital force" (Tempels 1959, p. 23). It is to signify this additional weight that I have chosen to shift from the "death" of "man" referred to in the preceding chapter, to the "death of the "Person" in this chapter. By utilizing the term "Person," I intend to capture the sense of immense violation of the human being denied their humanity. Even more, however, I intend to capture the notion, found throughout Tempels' work, that ontology is inextricably woven with identity; that it "made the Bantu the man he was," and it "belonged to his essential nature" (Tempels 1959, p. 12). The "death" of the "Person" therefore also denotes the "death" of entire "modes of being-in-the-world," those "most basic framing categories of social existence" (James 2006, p. 324) referred to in the introduction to this thesis. As will become clear in the continuing discussion, the "resurrection" that this chapter refers, also carries this additional weight.

Expanding on the "Biblical vision of the dead bones which came to life" in the opening epiphany, Tempels makes it clear that, for him, the recognition of a "*Bantu* ontology" is akin to the recognition that the "*Bantu*" belonged well and truly to the "category of men."

In the unnumbered crowd of the primitive masses, in the faces falsely looked upon as bestial, we see the animal expressions which we lent to these savages fade away. It is as if, all at once, a light of intelligence illumines, radiates from and glitters in these animal countenances that have been thus humanly transformed. We get the impression that these masses want to rise from their alleged lowliness, clothing themselves in the knowledge of their own lore and in their conception of the world; and thus standing before and looking down

upon the small group of Westerners, civilized indeed, but how puffed up with pride. We feel that we should speak "from one school of wisdom to another", "from one ideal to another", "from one conception of the world to another conception of it". The gods are dethroned, the disinherited stand before us as equals (Tempels 1959, pp. 73-74).

For Tempels, the need for such a shift in his fellow compatriots' perception of the Congolese was particularly acute amongst the missionaries who were, by neglecting the existence of a "Bantu ontology" "entering into no spiritual contact with them" (Tempels 1959, p. 11). Following on from calls for evangelization and catechetical work to be adapted to the culture and context, Tempels promoted a "real adaption" that is "the adaptation of our spirit to the spirit of these people"(Tempels 1959, p. 12). Not dissimilar, however, to the example of Conrad in the preceding chapter whose apparently anti-colonial "masterpiece" was in fact deeply dehumanizing, there is a similar irony in the work of Tempels. Although it would seem to be the logical implication of his epiphany, the colonial order itself was never denounced by Tempels. Instead, he maintained his belief in the colonial "*mission civilisatrice*," even if convinced that a dramatic shift in approach would better enable that mission:

There is a reason for safeguarding, for protecting with every care, for purifying and refining everything that is worthy of respect in native custom, in order to make a link, or, if the metaphor be preferred, a bridgehead, by means of which natives can attain without hindrance all that we have to offer them in respect of stable, deep, true civilization. Only if we set out from the true, the good and the stable in native custom shall we be able to lead our Africans in the direction of a true Bantu civilization (Tempels 1959, p. 11).

As previously noted, there have been many criticisms of Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy*. However, it is this failure of Tempels' to denounce the colonial project itself which was met with most criticism. Of Tempels' thinking, Aimé Césaire writes:

Let them plunder and torture in the Congo, let the Belgian colonizer seize all the natural resources, let him stamp out all freedom, let him crush all pride — let him go in peace, the Reverend Father Tempels consents to all that. But take care! You are going to the Congo? Respect — I do not say native property

(the great Belgian companies might take that as a dig at them), I do not say the freedom of the natives (the Belgian colonists might think that was subversive talk), I do not say the Congolese nation (the Belgian government might take it much amiss) — I say: You are going to the Congo? Respect the Bantu Philosophy! (Césaire 2000, p. 57).

In this severe criticism, the blatant silences hidden in his work are brought to the forefront. According to Césaire, the realities of “blood-stained money”, “innocent people murdered,” and “bullwhips,” were simply “evaporated! Disappeared, intermingled, become unrecognizable in the realm of pale ratiocinations” (Césaire 2000, p. 62). Despite the vision I opened this chapter with, then, no gods would be dethroned nor would the disinherited stand as equals in Tempels’ work. Instead, he tenuously remained both antagonist and exponent of the colonial order. And yet, even in the absence of a denunciation of the colonial order itself, his work was still controversial enough for him to be prematurely silenced by the Church hierarchies and be informally exiled to Belgium for a number of years Deacon (2003).<sup>41</sup> The silencing of one Belgian missionary, however, had little impact on the groundswell that was already occurring in the Belgian Congo, in Africa and the colonized world more broadly.

Unfortunately, a comprehensive account of the particular trajectory of thought Tempels is located within, and its extensions into other schools of African Philosophy is not possible here. It is worth drawing attention, however, to a number of scholars immediately following, including Vincent Mulago with his published thesis “*L’Union vitale Bantu, ou le principe de cohésion de la communauté chez les Bashi, les Banyarwanda et les Barundi*” and Alexis Kagame with “*La Philosophie Bantoue-Rwandaise de L’Être.*” In time, these scholars were joined by John Mbiti, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah and Englebort Mveng amongst others. It is, for example, in Mbiti’s 1969 work “*African Religions and Philosophy*” that the now renowned phrase “I am because we are and, since we are, therefore I am” first appeared

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<sup>41</sup> According to Deacon (2003) *Bantu Philosophy* was greeted with hostility by the Catholic Church hierarchies in the Belgian Congo. Jean Felix de Hemptinne, the Bishop of Elizabethville (modern day Lubumbashi) was particularly outraged and attempted to have the Vatican declare it heretical. Although he failed, he did manage to prevent Tempels from returning to the Congo after his leave of absence to Belgium in 1946. He later was able to return to the Congo where he was instrumental in the development of the Jamaa movement.

(Mbiti 1999). In the next chapter, I will return to this phrase and the proliferation of its use in an increasingly large body of work on the concept of “*Ubuntu*” and its contemporary application in a post-apartheid South Africa. For now, I draw attention to the way in which the theme of *a death (and resurrection) of the “Person”* witnessed in Tempels’ *Bantu Philosophy* became a key theme (and project) of the body of work known as “*ethnophilosophy*” and recognised as the first “rejoinder” to the question of the existence and nature of African philosophy (Deacon 2003). Framed another way, the birth of contemporary African Philosophy as a systematic endeavour has arisen as a response/reaction/resistance to the violence of Western discourse on Africa and can even be identified “as constitutive of a postcolonial quest for a uniquely African identity, which has become lost amid the brutality of the European rape of the African continent” (Deacon 2003, p. 115). Similarly Ramose (1999, p. 44) describes Africans as “an injured and conquered people” and that this position provides the “pre-eminent starting-point of African philosophy in its proper and fundamental signification.” In line with this, the innate dignity and the relational reality of the human being are common themes not only in ethnographic work that attempts to articulate African Philosophy as an “ethnophilosophy,” but also in the evolution of philosophy arising out of the African experience. Articulated by Gordon (2008, p. 123): “there is no black philosophical text... that lacks an appeal to some kind of humanism or to the humanity of black people, often defended in the form of a philosophical anthropology.”

The theme of *a death (and resurrection) of the “Person”* is even more pronounced when one examines the anti-colonial scholarship also born out of this time period and existing within and alongside the developments in African Philosophy. Francophone theorists such as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi and Octave Mannoni, all immensely influential in the development of postcolonial theory, offered more potent expressions of the deleterious nature of the ontological violence underlying colonialism. Unlike Tempels, however, they drew the clear association between such violence and its ripple effects outwards to all forms of colonial violence and the colonial project as a whole. In Césaire, for example, we hear a powerful testimony to the way in which the triple mission of the “colonial trinity” earlier described by Nzongola-Ntalaja (2007) as “political repression,” “economic exploitation” and “cultural oppression” emanates out of a simple equation:

My turn to state an equation: colonization = “thing-ification.” I hear the storm. They talk to me about progress, about “achievements,” diseases cured, improved standards of living. I am talking about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out. They throw facts at my head, statistics, mileages of roads, canals, and railroad tracks. I am talking about thousands of men sacrificed to the Congo-Ocean. I am talking about those who, as I write this, are digging the harbor of Abidjan by hand. I am talking about millions of men torn from their gods, their land, their habits, their life—from life, from the dance, from wisdom.....(Césaire 2000, p. 42).

In line with this, their vision of a “resurrection” went well beyond what Tempels had envisioned. For them, it was only decolonization which, as Fanon famously stated, could be “the veritable creation of new men”(Fanon 1965, p. 28). To close this chapter, then, I return to the vision of gods dethroned and the disinherited standing as equals in the opening epiphany and my earlier statement that it was not Tempels, nor the fellow compatriots “missionaries, magistrates, administrators” which his work sought to influence, who succeeded in taking his work to its logical conclusion.

It was the Congolese themselves, and more particularly the “évolués,” who Tempels had earlier denounced as “déracinés and degenerates,” who enacted another kind of resurrection. On June 30<sup>th</sup> 1960, Congo achieved its independence. Signifying the birth of a new nation, Congo was once again renamed, this time as the République du Congo (Republic of Congo). At the independence ceremonies, King Baudouin of Belgium and Patrice Lumumba, the first democratically elected Congolese Prime Minister, spoke. The marked divide in their speeches powerfully captures the essence of this chapter, both testifying to the continued presence of an *enduring struggle*, but also testifying to the way in which the voices of the colonized could no longer be silenced, in turn obliging a much more powerful shift in the history of this *enduring struggle*. Addressing the Congolese people, King Baudouin began with a tribute to his great-grand-uncle: “the independence of the Congo is formed by the outcome of the work conceived by King Leopold II’s genius, undertaken by him with

tenacious and continuous courage with Belgium's perseverance" (Watson Institute for International Studies 2005, p. 47). His speech continued paying tribute to Belgium which, over the course of 80 years, "sent the best of its sons to our soil" to bring progress and development, including delivering Congo from "the odious slave trafficking that decimated its populations" (Watson Institute for International Studies 2005, p. 47). In a particularly patronising line, we hear the following: "It is up to you now, Sirs, to demonstrate that we were right to trust you" (Watson Institute for International Studies 2005, p. 48). The unanticipated response from Lumumba, however, told a different story. Proclaiming the Congo "now in the hands of its own children," Lumumba addressed his fellow Congolese, calling them towards the "sublime struggle that will lead our country to peace, prosperity, and grandeur" (Watson Institute for International Studies 2005, p. 49).<sup>42</sup> Although he acknowledged that independence was being proclaimed with the agreement of Belgium, Lumumba made it clear that Independence had not been granted, but instead had been won; "no Congolese worthy of the name can ever forget, that it is by struggle that it has been conquered, an everyday struggle, an ardent and idealistic struggle, a struggle in which we have spared neither our strengths, nor our privations, nor our suffering, nor our blood" (Watson Institute for International Studies 2005, p. 49). His now famed speech continues: "We are proud of this struggle, of tears, of fire, and of blood, to the very depths of our being, for it was a noble and just struggle, and indispensable to put an end to the humiliating slavery which was imposed upon us by force" (Watson Institute for International Studies 2005, p. 49). His speech concludes with a tribute to the fighters of national freedom and the appeal "Long live independence and African unity! Long live the independent and sovereign Congo!" (Watson Institute for International Studies 2005, p. 50).

As a powerful indication of the continued relevance of this *enduring struggle* within (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions for the subsequent trajectory of this newly independent nation, less than seven months later, Lumumba was dead, the culmination of a vast conspiracy involving, on the one hand, Belgian, US and UN officials and, on the other, his Congolese political rivals including Kasa-Vubu, Mobutu and Tshombe (de Witte 2001; Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). The irony of the following statement speaks to this: "The history of

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<sup>42</sup> For a full transcript of the speech in French see also Salazar (2011).

Congo is not written in Paris, in Brussels, in New York, but in Congo, wrote the Prime Minister Lumumba, assassinated, dismembered and disintegrated overnight in sulfuric acid in the bush by a white "nobleman" of Belgium" (Clovis Mwamba, pers. conv., March, 2014).

## CHAPTER THREE: FINDING PEACE AMONGST RESTLESS AND UNATONED BONES

In the previous two chapters, I began with two temporally distinct moments of epiphany sharing a similar astonishment and a lingering scepticism about the humanity of the African “Person.” They were used to capture what has been described as an *enduring struggle* within (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions. Indicative of the slow but substantial shifting that has occurred over this period, it is hard to fathom today that such statements then represented a progressive perspective. And yet, as alluded to at the end of the preceding chapter, there is certainly evidence of the continued presence and relevance of this *enduring struggle* for the ensuing trajectory of the nation and by extension, the contemporary struggle for peace. The purpose of this chapter is to move us to the contemporary moment and to again ask the question which opened *Part One*, “How do colonial histories matter in the world today?” In doing so, I return to solidify my central contention; that the struggle for peace in the DRC occurs in the context of a contemporary global landscape intimately bound up in enduring legacies of colonialism and imperialism. Reframed with the added emphases from the previous chapters, my contention is that the contemporary struggle for peace occurs in the context of that *enduring struggle* and the consequential *birth (and death) of “the man,”* an ontological violence through which modern “imperial” man has been created by differentiating “him” from and imposing him over the “Other;” and the devastating impact of that ontological violence evidenced in the “death” of peoples and their own ways of being-in-the-world, but also the continued resistance, resilience and thus “resurrection” of peoples in the face of such a “death.”

The structure of this chapter will thus reflect a statement I made earlier, that the task of *Finding Peace Amongst Restless and Unatoned Bones* refers to a double necessity: the need to unpack the ongoing influence of the *enduring struggle* on dominant narratives on humanness, violence and peace in the DRC, in turn destabilizing their power; as well as the need to consider its enduring influence on the local ontological landscape on which the struggle for peace is enacted today. Accordingly, I begin with an exploration of those dominant narratives, drawing attention to a *duress* evidenced not only in the continued

representation of the DRC as a perennial “heart of darkness,” but also in the continued Eurocentric bias in dominant peace interventions and strategies; and in the continued subjugation of alternative peace traditions. Here I will highlight the DRC as a powerful case for the argument that a pessimism about humanness more broadly, exaggerated by an even deeper pessimism about African humanness, has reduced both curiosity in exploring the roots of violence and creativity in responding to it. In recognizing the need for alternatives, this chapter then shifts focus to the “decolonial turn”<sup>43</sup> gaining momentum over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries which has been asserting the need to move beyond the history of an *enduring struggle*, finally enabling alternative ontological realities, previously denigrated, suppressed, and marginalized, to occupy their own valued places in contributing to our shared global future. Taking up the possibilities offered by the “decolonial turn,” I turn to the central concept of *Búmùntù*. Whilst positioning this thesis in the context of existing literature, I will also articulate the rationale for a dialogue on *Búmùntù* as an exercise in border thinking for its contribution to the struggle for peace.

### ***A HEART OF DARKNESS: A STORY THAT BEGINS WITH THE IRREDUCIBILITY OF VIOLENCE AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF PEACE***

To situate ourselves in the contemporary moment, let me first return to the voice of a triumphant Lumumba proclaiming the Congo “now in the hands of its own children,” and calling all Congolese towards the “sublime struggle that will lead our country to peace, prosperity, and grandeur” (Watson Institute for International Studies 2005, p. 49). This was a moment of hope which was almost immediately interrupted by the image of his dead body hacked to pieces and dissolved in sulphuric acid. In fact, this marked a more profound interruption; the 30th June, 1960, which was envisioned to be the birth of an independent (and peaceful) nation, became instead a bloody miscarriage of the Congo Crisis (1960-1965). To move from this pivotal moment in history to the contemporary struggle for peace which is the focus of this chapter, I offer one particular account of post-colonial Congo from Bisanswa (2010, p. 69). Although the finer details of each moment within this condensed and not

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<sup>43</sup> On a “decolonial turn” see for example Maldonado-Torres (2006, 2008, 2017) and Mignolo & Escobar (2010).

apolitical summary are worth further scrutiny,<sup>44</sup> I choose to use this account in full because it points to the tenacity, complexity and oftentimes overwhelming nature of a seemingly interminable history of violence, its striking disjuncture with *Búmùntù*, earlier offered as a motivating factor for the approach taken in this thesis.

Political independence on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1960, followed by army mutinies, the parachuting of Belgian troops, 'Katanga's secession and then [South] Kasai's, and intervention of United Nations troops; the mysterious death of the UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld, the arrest and assassination of Lumumba, Mulele's rebellions, two coups d'état by Mobutu, two wars in Shaba, and temporary seizure of Moba by pro-Kabila troops; the democratization process, a long and incomplete transition, and a student massacre in Lubumbashi; embargo by the international community, Mobutu's expulsion of all Belgian cooperation experts, closure of all Belgian consulates in Eastern Zaire, and lootings in Kinshasa and in major towns in the country; assassination of Burundi's democratically elected (Hutu) President Melchior Ndadaye, massacre and massive exodus of Hutus to Eastern Zaire, assassination of Presidents Habyarimana of Rwanda and Ntiamirira of Burundi, flight to Eastern Zaire of Hutu populations of Rwanda, and the death of ten Belgian blue helmets; Opération Turquoise, the 1996 war waged in the Congo by Burundian, Ugandan and Rwandan troops, and the dismantlement of Rwandan refugee camps in Eastern Zaire; the advent of the former guerrilla Laurent-Désiré Kabila and the exile and death of disease-stricken Marshal Mobutu in total solitude in Morocco; a new devastating war started in August of 1998 by Burundian, Ugandan and Rwandan troops, bringing panic and desolation to the civilian population (4 million dead) in Eastern Congo; the mysterious assassination of Kabila and, against all expectations, his succession by his son Joseph Kabila, who, it is said, has no political culture and no better intellectual preparation than three months of military training in China, yet curiously is supported by all Western powers; inter-Congolese dialogue

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<sup>44</sup> Comprehensive accounts of the trajectory of Congolese history following independence can be found elsewhere in for example: (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007; Prunier 2009; Turner 2007, 2013; Young 1965)

followed by a new transitional government, despite growing insecurity and attempts at destabilization by Rwanda and Uganda — and so on (Bisanswa 2010, p. 69).

Whilst this particular account may be criticized for reducing Congolese history to a “series of subjugations narrativized in a seamless continuity” (Mbembe 2002, p. 243),<sup>45</sup> it does capture the sense of a seemingly interminable history of violence. Importantly, whilst I have represented it as a disjuncture when placed alongside the concept of *Búmùntù*, from another angle, this history of violence is not at all interpreted as a disjuncture. Instead, the ongoing violence and intense hardships of the present can also serve as an affirmation of colonial narratives of the “savagery” and “inherent” violence of Congolese, which once provided a justification for the use of violence as a necessary evil in the civilizing mission.

It has been argued that the turmoils of contemporary times has provided a nostalgic veil for some in remembering the colonial past (Bisanswa 2010). In a particularly striking example of this nostalgic veil, in a speech of February 2004 directed to the Belgian Senate, current President Joseph Kabila paid homage to the “memory of all those pioneers,” “the Belgian missionaries, colonial agents and contractors who believed in the dream of King Leopold II to build a state in the heart of Africa” (La Libre Belgique 2004). Rather than the speech of the proudly nationalist Congolese leader, his address instead echoes that of the patronising Belgian King Baudouin described in the preceding chapter. Writing of this bizarre praise of the dream of a King, which “was the nightmare of countless Africans,” Bakaly Sembe (2006, p. 101) comments that this lack of historical insight can be found amongst many Congolese within what he argues to be an “ahistorical society” where colonial narratives of pre-colonial Congo as “a savage land with no history or achievement to be proud of” persist. Bisanswa (2010, p. 71) suggests that such perspectives both amongst Congolese and the broader international community, seem to identify Belgian colonial intervention in the Congo as merely a “parenthesis,” or quoting Jewsiewicki “an interlude between the precolonial past and the postcolonial present” as if a full circle has been turned, back to “primitiveness,” “savagery” and “darkness.”

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<sup>45</sup> Mbembe (2002, p. 243) makes this criticism of the instrumentalist paradigm of African philosophy more broadly which has been characterized by a mechanistic and reified vision of history where history is ever imposed upon Africans.

Given a dearth of empirical research on local perspectives, it is difficult to ascertain how widespread these views may be at the local level and how the persistence of such colonial narratives might influence local understandings of violence and the struggle for peace.<sup>46</sup> In contrast, there is a considerable amount of scholarship examining how their persistence continues to impact international (Eurocentric) representations and analyses of violence and peace (Autesserre 2009, 2010, 2012; Baaz & Stern 2008; Chiwengo 2008; Dunn 2003; Eriksson Baaz & Stern 2010; Mertens 2017; Ndangam 2002). As a consequence, it is more possible to consider its continued influence on the struggle for peace.

Having researched the international peace-building effort during Congo's transition from 'war to peace' (2003-2006), Autesserre (2010) writes of a widespread view amongst many international actors that Congo was "inherently" violent (p. 74-81) and that the ongoing violence in the east of the country was not seen as evidence that war was continuing. Instead, it was viewed as a "normal feature of a peaceful Congo" (Autesserre 2010, p. 67). Expanding on this, she offers the following analysis:

...they usually emphasized the unending, puzzling, and gruesome character of the violence; the state of quasi-anarchy and chaos; the polarization of the society according to ethnic issues; and the 'folkloric' aspects of the Mai Mai militias, such as reliance on supernatural powers and fighting naked. They continually referred to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and used the words "barbarian and "barbarous." They often analysed the conflict and the peace process in Hobbesian terms. These recurring tropes portrayed the Congolese as irrational savages and constructed their actions as senseless and utterly foreign to civilized Western minds (Autesserre 2009, p. 264).

In essence, citing the words of one Western diplomat who was interviewed, "Hobbes would have been right at home" (Autesserre 2010, p. 69). Importantly, according to her analysis,

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<sup>46</sup> One exception to this is an exploratory article by Rubbers (2009) which examines four dominant narratives that individuals in the province of Haut-Katanga (neighboring Haut-Lomami) offered to explain the causes of post-colonial crises. I will return to explore the way in which these four narratives reflect the theme of colonial *duress* later in this chapter.

the persistence of colonial narratives of the “savagery” and “inherent” violence of Congolese further reinforced a dominant characteristic of the “liberal peace” discourse that decentralized violence remains a problem of the absence of a common power. This, she argues, ultimately contributed to a fundamentally flawed approach to peace-building, whereby international actors were able to justify the preclusion of action to address local conflicts and endorsed the focus on interventions at the national and regional level – an almost exclusively top-down intervention.<sup>47</sup> Worse still, she argues that international efforts exacerbated the problems they aimed to combat – for example through state reconstruction programs that boosted the capacity of an authoritarian regime to oppress its population (Autesserre 2012, p. 4).<sup>48</sup>

Importantly, Autesserre’s (2010) criticism of the international peacebuilding effort in the specific context of the DRC is not an isolated one. It exists in the context of a broader debate which, according to Richmond (2010, pp. 1-2), has “developed the contours of an epic intellectual struggle” and has “touched upon the heart of political, economic, social, and cultural systems; institutions, ideologies, and norms that have been held to be the core of liberal political theory for hundreds of years; and, currently, of generally held assumptions about IR, peace and conflict.” Accordingly, dominant peace interventions and strategies promoted by leading states, leading international organizations and international financial institutions have increasingly come under severe criticisms, and have even been argued to be

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<sup>47</sup> It is important to note that such a criticism does not preclude the value of “top-down” approaches to peace-building. The Congo wars, during their height, directly involved over six African nations and more than a dozen armed militia groups, who ultimately carved up the nation into a series of rebel-held territorial enclaves (Beneduce et al. 2006). The Congo Wars have been described as civil wars to overthrow a dictator, as international wars in self-defence, as the spill-over effect of Rwanda’s Hutu-Tutsi conflict, and as resource wars with Africans as pawns to greater powers outside the continent (Autesserre 2010; Lemarchand, Rene 2009; Prunier 2009; Turner 2007, 2013). As is evident amongst these explanations, there is a strong rationale for the emphasis on the national, regional and international dimensions of the conflicts. And yet, there are also severe limitations to an exclusive emphasis at these levels. Numerous scholars have instead drawn attention to the local drivers of conflict, largely ignored by international peace-builders, including conflicts over land, mineral resources, traditional power, local taxes and the relative social status of specific groups and individuals (Autesserre 2009, 2010, 2012; Baaz & Stern 2008; Beneduce et al. 2006). In contrast to an Hobbesian vision of local actors engaged in a “senseless” violence in the absence of a common power, these accounts show local actors as agents who produce violence for functional purposes (Beneduce et al. 2006).

<sup>48</sup> See also Marriage (2013) who has argued that the “formal peace” established in 2002 answered the security concerns of the international community by strengthening formal institutions to provide containment and control, whilst the priorities of the Congolese population for agency and predictability in their pursuit of security were undermined.

in a state of crisis (Cooper 2007). This “liberal peace” has been criticized for its almost exclusive focus on state-building as the principal vehicle of peace, promoting Western-style governance with the core elements of security and stabilization, reinforcing states, democratic governance and economic marketization (Campbell, Chandler & Shabaratanam 2011; Richmond 2010). The conventional wisdom is that state fragility itself engenders violent conflict. By consequence, state-building in regions of state fragility is viewed as a central task of contemporary policies, an assumption being that top-down interventions will naturally filter down to the local level. Even more relevant to the theme of an *enduring struggle* specifically related to the non-Western “Other,” critics have drawn attention to the imperial legacy and the ongoing hegemony of the “Liberal Peace,” likening it to a “new imperialism” and “neo-colonialism” (Chandler 2006; Charbonneau 2014; Jacoby 2007). Jacoby (2007, p. 536), for example, likens the modernisation of conflict-affected states through the reconstitution of their polities and societies to a “mission civilisatrice” which “has been a way of both pursuing prosperity and minimising dissent (internal and external).”

Whilst the persistence of colonial narratives of the “savagery” and “inherent” violence of Congolese in dominant representations and understandings of violence may represent the more overt and tangible evidence of the *enduring struggle*, one may argue that the dominance of the “liberal peace” to the exclusion of alternative local peace traditions may represent the more subtle, often unquestioned, evidence of that same *enduring struggle*.

Extending this relationship further, it is — once again — worth drawing attention to the presence of Hobbes, remembering that earlier he was presented as one of numerous influential thinkers who appear to have “built their understanding of the political on the recognition of the irreducibility of violence in human affairs” (Oksala 2012, p. 3). In *Chapter One*, I drew attention to an argument that the *enduring struggle* to which this thesis refers may well represent an exaggerated form of an already existing struggle; that Conrad’s tale was not just a tale about an Imperial “heart of darkness” or an African “heart of darkness,” but also a human “heart of darkness;” and that a “pessimistic trend” which has long depicted human beings as having a natural inclination towards self-interest, competition, and — ultimately — human destructiveness has had quite a profound influence on the study of human violence (de Zulueta 2006, 2007). In a very direct way, Autessere’s (2010) unearthing

of the presence of Hobbes in the voices of international peacebuilders is suggestive of that legacy. However, even without referring to Hobbes, it is worth asking to what extent his legacy may be embodied in dominant peace interventions and strategies and to what extent other thinkers representative of a “pessimistic” trend are also present. Certainly, it should be acknowledged that contemporary understandings of violence and approaches to peace-building are complex and multi-dimensional, deriving their form and function from diverse ideological traditions and movements. Individual actors involved in peace-building efforts are even more diverse. The delicate dance, then, between the micro and the macro, the local and the global, and top-down and bottom-up is complex, even without the possibility that a long-entrenched pessimism is at play. Nevertheless, it is a question worth asking, particularly in light of the aforementioned “epic intellectual struggle” (Richmond 2010, pp. 1-2) currently occurring regarding peacebuilding theory and practice. In the specific case of the DRC, it is the interaction between a “liberal peace” (and its Eurocentric bias) and its application or imposition in the context of an imagined “heart of darkness” which leads me to suggest that the DRC may well provide a powerful case for the argument that a pessimism on humanness more broadly, exaggerated by an even deeper pessimism on African humanness, may have reduced both curiosity in exploring the roots of violence and creativity in responding to it.

This returns us to the aforementioned “epic intellectual struggle” currently taking place regarding peacebuilding theory and practice. Summarizing its key positions, Richmond (2010, pp. 1-2) identifies it as increasingly a debate between “dogmatic liberal and statist positions towards peace” and a more “critical and reflective position centred on social and public concerns in their everyday political, social, economic, and cultural contexts....” Framed in another way, it has also been described as a struggle between the “top-down” and the “bottom-up” (Charbonneau & Parent 2012). According to Richmond (2010) as the “Liberal Peace,” and the assumptions of the international community regarding its capacity to control and govern, has begun to unravel, so has the vibrancy of the debate. A “renaissance” of interest in the “local,” labelled as the “local turn” has in turn arisen in the study and practice of peacebuilding (Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013). According to Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013, p. 763) this “local turn” represents a “terra nullius” for the liberal peace, “a dangerous and wild place where Western rationality, with its diktats of universality and modernisation, is challenged in different ways.” It is in light of such a debate that this thesis argues the need

for an alternative, or indeed many alternatives, through which the themes of humanness, violence and peace in the DRC can be explored.

### *I AM, WHERE I DO AND WHERE I THINK*

In the preceding chapters, I have emphasized the relevance of (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions in exploring the struggle for peace in the DRC. I referred to Descartes "*Cogito ergo sum*" (I think, therefore, I am) as just one influential moment in the history of that *enduring struggle*. Later, I also referred to a reformulation by Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 252) which draws attention to the silences hidden in its actual application philosophically and historically: 'I think (others do not think, or do not think properly), therefore I am (others are-not, lack being, should not exist or are dispensable).' Taking up the possibilities offered by the "decolonial turn," I will now turn to a more recent alternative: "I am, where I do and where I think" or its simpler form "I am where I think" (Mignolo 1999, 2000, 2002, 2007, 2011; Mignolo & Escobar 2010; Mignolo & Tlostanova 2006). This formulation has been proposed by Mignolo (2011, p. xvi) as an "anchor of decolonial epistemologies" which has been shifting the modern<sup>49</sup> foundation of knowledge characterized by territorialism and imperialism, from a theo- and ego- politics of knowledge applied as a universality (see *Chapter One*)<sup>50</sup> to the geo- and body- politics of knowledge. The geo- and body- politics of knowledge, according to Mignolo (2011), recognizes that who we are is significantly bound up in the places within which we exist, within which we do, and within which we think. Moving beyond notions of "situated knowledge," it goes further to remind us that such places are themselves geo-politically located, and thus also located within the "colonial difference." In *Part Two: In Search of Mwendelo Muyampe: A Good Way of Walking on the Road of Life* I will return to explore in more depth the implications of such

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<sup>49</sup> Mignolo and Tlostanova (2006, p. 205) clarify the use of the term modern to mean "the socio-historical organization and classification of the world founded on a macro-narrative and on a specific concept and principles of knowledge."

<sup>50</sup> Mignolo (2011, p. 141) uses the terms theo- and ego- politics of knowledge to refer firstly to the dominance of Christian theology followed by the dominance of a secular philosophy/science dependent on Reason or the Cartesian ego/mind as the "overarching conceptual and cosmological frames of knowledge-making." Both of these bases of knowledge, he argues, have hidden their geo-historical foundations and thus too geo-political locations, legitimizing the claim that knowledge was "beyond bodies and places" thus relegating alternate knowledge traditions to the peripheries.

de/colonial epistemologies for my own process as a “white” “outsider” undertaking research in the DRC. For now, however, I refer to this epistemic shift or “decolonial turn” as an opportunity to consider the possibility of alternatives, to explore humanness, violence and peace from another angle. As Mignolo writes:

The colonial difference is the space where coloniality of power is enacted. It is also the space where the restitution of subaltern knowledge is taking place and where border thinking is emerging. The colonial difference is the space where local histories inventing and implementing global designs meet local histories, the space in which global designs have to be adapted, adopted, rejected, integrated, or ignored (Mignolo 2011, p. xxv).

Accordingly, in the same way that the “colonial difference” has been at the centre of the formation of the modern/colonial world system, it is also seen at the centre of its transformation. It is in light of such possibilities, that I have argued for the need to move beyond dominant narratives positioned firmly within Eurocentric paradigms and ways of knowing. Whilst the modern/colonial world system has historically studied itself from “inside itself,” border thinking is defined as an “epistemology of the exteriority; that is of the outside created from the inside; and as such, it is always a decolonial project” (Mignolo & Tlostanova 2006, p. 206). Perhaps somewhat alike Tempels’ (1959, p. 74) feeling that we should speak “from one school of wisdom to another”, “from one ideal to another”, “from one conception of the world to another conception of it,” border thinking acknowledges and valorises the existence of a plurality of ontological systems and traditions previously denigrated, suppressed and marginalized. However, unlike Tempels, border thinking also acknowledges that such systems and traditions have existed at the borders of the discourse of the modern/colonial world system, not irrespective to, but alongside, in response to, and in struggle against its violent apparatus. The relevance of this for understandings of the origins and evolution of *Búmùntù* was alluded to in the preceding chapter, where I noted that the innate dignity and the relational reality of the human being are common themes not only in ethnographic work that attempts to articulate African Philosophy as an “ethnophilosophy,” but also in the evolution of African Philosophy arising out of the African experience. It is for this reason that I have suggested that *Búmùntù*, with its assertion of the sacredness and inviolable dignity of human beings and its obligation to live in harmony with others,

represents one example of this. In the following section, I will move to explore further this central concept of *Búmùntù* and articulate my rationale for the approach taken in this work.

### *DIALOGUE ON BÚMÙNTÙ: A STORY THAT BEGINS WITH THE OBLIGATION TO FIND PEACE*

As described earlier, I did not begin this work with a focus on *Búmùntù*. Instead, it arose gradually during the early stages of my candidature. From the initial allusion of its relevance during an early dialogue with a good friend and mentor, Clovis Mwamba, *Búmùntù* quickly began to present as a potentially rich frame of reference which responded to multiple dimensions of the problematic raised in a broad body of literature relevant to the struggle for peace. Initially, my rationale for a dialogue on *Búmùntù* and its potential contribution to scholarship on peace was a simple one: a dialogue on *Búmùntù* is an intervention in the dominant discourses on humanness, violence and peace in the DRC, as it can offer a humanizing narrative which contests the continued representation of the DRC as a perennial “heart of darkness.” If, as a result of the persistence of colonial narratives, violence has the potential to become viewed as “normal” even in a peaceful Congo, a dialogue on *Búmùntù* offers an opportunity to tell a different story of what is considered “normal” in a peaceful Congo. It offers an opportunity to construct another kind of vision for a peaceful Congo; to consider the question of peace, not only from a local perspective, but — even more so — from a local humanistic tradition that has long inspired movements condemning and rejecting violence and promoting and restoring peace.

The emphasis here is on *Búmùntù* as a productive peace enhancing and maintaining concept that has powerful potential in contributing to the struggle for peace. Unfortunately, in the present context of the DRC, a relative silence on the concept of *Búmùntù* exists and, as alluded to earlier, it has not yet penetrated the broader international literature on violence and peace. However, a small collection of contemporary Congolese scholars are exceptions to this relative silence, their voices existing within a much larger literature on the equivalent concepts of Botho (in Sesotho or Setswana), Bumuntu (in KiSukuma, Kihayi, Kiluba, Tshiluba), Bomoto (in Bobangi), Gimuntu (in Kikongo and giKwese) Umundu (in Kikuyu) Umuntu (in Uganda), Umunthu (in Malawi) and Vumuntu (in shiTsonga and shiTswa) (Hailey 2008) all in

sub-saharan Africa.

With the struggle for peace as my central concern, the equivalent concept of *Ubuntu* in the South African context is particularly relevant because it was here that leaders like Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu actively drew on the concept to build a new consensus in post-apartheid South Africa. Drawing on the ontological statement “I am because we are,” as well as on proverbs such as the well-known Xhosa proverb “*Ubuntu ungamantu ngabanye abantu*” or its Zulu equivalent “*Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu*” (a person is a person through other persons), they appealed to this deep-rooted African spirit of humanism to assist in the challenging transition to a liberated South Africa. Whilst *Ubuntu* as a concept has earlier roots,<sup>51</sup> it was during this period that an interest in *Ubuntu* gathered substantial momentum in South Africa (Gade 2011). It was also during this period that *Ubuntu* began to receive substantial global attention for, amongst other things, its potential for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa and beyond (Akinola & Okeke Uzodike 2018; Murithi 2006; Muyingi 2013).

As a system of values focused on social harmony and a deep respect for human life and human dignity, as a concept, *Ubuntu* can be seen to be antithetical to violence, prejudice and hate (Hailey 2008). The belief that our humanity is inextricably bound up in the humanity of our fellow human beings has been considered integral to peace by way of its valorisation of a communal life where the obligation to maintain positive relations resides with each member of society as part of their “becoming” fully human. As Murithi writes:

This notion of *Ubuntu* sheds light on the importance of peacemaking through the principles of reciprocity, inclusivity and a sense of shared destiny between peoples. It provides a value system for giving and receiving forgiveness. It provides a rationale for sacrificing or letting go of the desire to take revenge for past wrongs. It provides an inspiration and suggests guidelines for societies and their governments, on how to legislate and establish laws which will promote reconciliation (Murithi 2006, p. 29).

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<sup>51</sup> According to Gade (2011) written references to *Ubuntu* are found from at least 1846.

According to Akinola and Okeke Uzodike (2018, p. 102) “*Ubuntu*’s ultimate goal is interpersonal cooperation for the common good.” As a result, societies underpinned by *Ubuntu* values tend to employ conflict resolution strategies to resolve disputes and restore relationships as a form of law and order (Akinola & Okeke Uzodike 2018). Given this, *Ubuntu* is seen to represent Africa’s egalitarian, humanistic, interconnectedness, communitarian and participatory democratic values and thus can underpin African indigenous justice systems which are restorative, transformative, contextualised and negotiated (Elechi, Morris & Schauer 2010). Examining the peacemaking traditions of “*Ubuntu* societies,” Murithi (2006) finds five key stages: the acknowledgement of guilt, showing remorse and repenting, asking for and giving forgiveness, and paying compensation or reparation as a prelude to reconciliation. He argues that *Ubuntu* philosophy can ‘culturally re-inform’ our practical efforts to build peace and heal our traumatized communities. Reflecting on the aforementioned crisis of liberal peacebuilding more specifically, Tom (2018, p. 78) suggests *Ubuntu* as an opening in thinking about a hybrid and ‘post-liberal peace’ in post-conflict Africa and calls for more research examining amongst other things, “how *Ubuntu* resists, rejects, subverts, accepts and hybridises liberalism.”

Returning to the specific context of the DRC, a small collection of contemporary Congolese scholars have argued for its revitalization in this context. Muyingi (2013), drawing from the literature on *Ubuntu*, proposes it as an African ethical framework, the communitarian rule of perpetual peace and the valorisation of the dignity of the person which can play an important role to assist both in the resolution of conflicts, but also towards establishing the ongoing conditions needed for peace, including freedom, dignity, human rights and development.<sup>52</sup> Yanga (2006), applying the literature on *Ubuntu* but equally referring to the equivalent concept of *Búmùntù* from his own Luba-Kasai tradition, proposes a revitalization of this African art of humanness. His work addresses what he refers to as the regression of black Africa in general, as well as the particular challenges of the Great Lakes Region. Finally, Nkulu N'Sengha (2002) specifically drawing on the concept of *Búmùntù* from the Luba-Katanga tradition, has explored its potential as a foundation for an African Theology of Human Rights.

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<sup>52</sup> Muyingi (2013) also refers to the promotion of character virtues within society, but particularly amongst those in leadership positions. Such character virtues of those in power are in turn associated with equitable distribution of resources.

As previously mentioned, my initial rationale for a dialogue on *Búmùntù* and its potential contribution to scholarship on peace was relatively simple; however, the emphasis on *Búmùntù* as a productive peace-enhancing and -maintaining concept is just one part of the story. Despite the great potential of *Búmùntù/Ubuntu* suggested in this literature, it is not without its critics. Indeed, there is a significant body of literature — particularly from the South African context — that draws attention to the more negative aspects of its application in that context. Various criticisms include: that *Ubuntu* has been used to foster conformity and conservatism; that *Ubuntu* has been used to deny humanity to non-autochthonous individuals; that it has been applied in South Africa in a universalised and thus decontextualized sense (Hailey 2008). A more staunch criticism from Marx (2002) posits *Ubuntu* as an “invented tradition” which he argues has been co-opted to serve the interests of a new cultural nationalism promoting conformity and stifling dissent. Similarly, Mantolini and Kwindigwi (2013) go so far as to call for the end of the project of *Ubuntu*, arguing that the “aggressive” promotion of it in post-apartheid South Africa has been an elitist project. Interestingly, they also question the relevance of *Ubuntu* in the present context, drawing attention to the disjuncture between the metaphysical conditions required for the attainment of *Ubuntu* and what they describe as the “stark ontological and ethical crisis” of the contemporary moment.

Whilst these criticisms are important, I will not enter further into such rich and complex debates as they do refer to the specific context of post-apartheid South Africa, where it can be argued that a resurgence (and reinvention) of *Ubuntu* has occurred alongside a reinvention of South Africa as an African nation readmitted to a “global community of states” (Praeg 2014, p. 11). Still, they do highlight some important points which are pertinent to a dialogue on *Búmùntù* in the context of Kamina.

First, whilst I have previously referred to *Búmùntù* as a *local* concept or indeed a *local* humanistic tradition, the literature on the particular resurgence (or reinvention) of *Ubuntu* in post-apartheid South Africa and the complexities around its meaning and application in the context of a modern nation state reminds us that the local ontological landscape from which *Ubuntu* or its equivalent *Búmùntù* originates is dramatically different from that on which it is

enacted today. This is particularly so when reflecting on a contemporary global reality where “even the most circumscribed of locales is set within a larger context of international influences, indelibly changing both the character of the local and the translocal” (Nordstrom 1997, p. 37). Hence, the tension between the local and the global has been noted as a primary matrix structuring thinking about *Ubuntu* and is the reason why *Ubuntu* has been and will continue to elude definition (Praeg 2014; Van Binsbergen 2001). Because of this, Praeg (2014, pp. 78-80) draws a distinction between *ubuntu* as an historic “ethnic morality” (Prozesky 2009, p. 5) and *Ubuntu* as a contemporary abstract ethic. On the one hand, the lived praxis of *ubuntu* can be so deeply ontologically rooted within a specific cultural milieu that “infringements are seen as damaging not only to community relations but also to the delicate harmony of the whole deeply religious order of the universe” (Richardson 2009, p. 136). On the other hand, contemporary discourse on *Ubuntu* can be seen as a *glocal* phenomenon, which is both “a function and a critique of Western modernity” (Praeg 2014, p. 81).

This leads to a second point which, in turn, can remind us of the argument on border thinking made earlier, that previously subjugated ontological systems and traditions have existed at the borders of the discourse of the modern/colonial world system, alongside, in response to and in struggle against its violent apparatus. Accordingly, as Praeg (2014, p. 13) writes; “*Ubuntu* [as a contemporary abstract ethic] is about power,” and to write about or indeed to dialogue about it is “to engage in a struggle for power.” Expanding upon this, whilst *Ubuntu* is often closely associated with peace, even becoming a “synecdoche for a whole range of non-violent political praxes such as forgiveness and reconciliation,” to reduce *Ubuntu* to the apolitical is “at best naïve and at worst sinister” (Praeg 2014, p. 14). Post-colonial discourse on *Ubuntu* is embedded in the post-colonial quest for African identity, in the political struggle for recognition, and in the reinvention of Africa and its relationship to the world through the retelling of the African story, a necessary process “for overcoming the phase of humiliation and existential anguish caused by the historical debasement of the continent” (Mbembe 2002, p. 256). Framed another way, it is embedded in that aforementioned *enduring struggle* and for this reason, Praeg (2014, p. 14) writes “we do not only struggle to get *Ubuntu* recognised; the struggle for recognition also determines how we come to think about *Ubuntu*.”

An understanding of this leads me to articulate a secondary and more complex rationale for a dialogue on *Búmùntù*. If, as argued earlier a pessimism on humanness more broadly, exaggerated by an even deeper pessimism on African humanness, may have reduced both curiosity in exploring the roots of violence and creativity in responding to it, a more important contribution of a dialogue on *Búmùntù* is not simply its intervention in dominant discourses; such an intervention may have the unintended consequence of hiding or denying the reality of violence existing both within Congolese “traditions” and within the contemporary landscape. More so, a dialogue on *Búmùntù*, in its emphasis on the relational and the human capacity for peace, offers an opportunity to revive a curiosity in exploring the roots of violence and creativity in responding to it. More specifically it assists us to maintain curiosity around the *duress* of that *enduring struggle* and its ripple effects onto the local ontological landscape on which the struggle for peace is enacted today.

To further justify this rationale, I will shift from existing literature on *Búmùntù/Ubuntu* to another field of study relevant to this exploration of the struggle for peace. Whilst I have previously drawn attention to the argument of a “pessimistic” trend and its impact on the study of human violence, it is important to acknowledge that the notion of *struggle* I have regularly employed is itself suggestive of contention, of discord, of debate, of strife, and of hope. This alludes to a long tradition of contestation, from the initial controversies between Pelagianism vs Augustinian,<sup>53</sup> the debate between “man” as essentially competitive or essentially co-operative has continued to play out in intellectual feuds such as those of Hobbes vs Rousseau and Kropotkin vs Darwin. It is, however, only in recent decades, as the increasing evidence and knowledge in the fields of human development, psychology, neuroscience and trauma studies has exploded, that a more convincing body of evidence has emerged to support the argument that as a species, we are essentially socially co-operative, relational, altruistic and empathic beings who can, however, be highly vulnerable to the

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<sup>53</sup> Before its acceptance in official Christian doctrine, there were bitter battles on the notion of ‘original sin.’ The Augustinian doctrine, which became accepted as official Christian doctrine, was in fact a response to Pelagianism which taught that the sin of Adam and Eve in no way tainted human nature. Instead humanity was seen to have absolute free will, full control and full responsibility for both evil and good.

environments we are exposed to.<sup>54</sup> It is not my intention to enter into a complex debate about human nature, however, the fact that these recent developments across numerous disciplines emphasize our relationality and thus also our capacity for peace can provide further support for an exploration of humanness, violence and peace utilizing the concept of *Búmùntù* (and its relational reality) as central guide. As Ury (1999) argues, realizing that for the most part the human condition is a life in peace with periods of strife, rather than the other way around, shifts the challenge of peace from a negative one of ending violence to a positive one of extending peace.

The second part to this growing body of evidence, however is also particularly relevant, making it feel like a double-edged sword. The notion that we are highly vulnerable to our environments confirms a long history of thinking on the indelible marks that experiences of past violence can leave on individuals, communities and entire societies, both on present and on future generations. Although “thought of, alluded to, written about, and examined in both oral and written histories in all societies, cultures and religions” (Danieli 1998, p. 2), it has been through the development of numerous iterations of “*trauma studies*” that an enhanced awareness of the enduring effects of past violence has been attained. Whilst a comprehensive overview of this particularly fluid body of work is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is to the impact of trauma on this apparently essentially socially co-operative, relational, altruistic and empathic quality of our being that I wish to draw attention to.

This is captured in one of the early definitions of psychological trauma by Erich Lindemann (1944) as the “sudden uncontrollable disruption of affiliative bonds” (de Zulueta 2006, p. 185). Such an understanding has been enhanced further as a focus on the psychological trauma impacting individuals has expanded to consider psycho-social trauma at the collective level also. Erikson (1976), for example, defines collective trauma as “a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the

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<sup>54</sup> The work of Bowlby (1988), the pioneer of attachment theory, can be seen as seminal in this shift. Bowlby held the view that infants are programmed to develop in socially cooperative ways, however the environments they are exposed to that can severely impact that natural development. Useful reviews of this body of literature include de Zulueta (2006) and Perry and Szalavitz (2010). For scholarly work on human relationality more broadly see for example Bowles & Gintis (2011), Cacioppo & Patrick (2008), Gergen (2009), Nowak (2011), Sennett (2012), Spretnak (2011) and Thayer-Bacon (2003).

prevailing sense of communality”.....”a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared.....”I” continue to exist, though damaged and maybe even permanently changed. “You” continue to exist, though distant and hard to relate to. But “we” no longer exist as a connected pair or as linked cells in a larger communal body”(Erikson 1995, p. 187). Whilst the emphasis here is on a “centrifugal force” which tears the social fabric and isolates individuals from their cultural and relational centre, Erikson (1995) also draws attention to a “centripetal force” existing alongside. According to Erikson (1995, p. 190), “traumatic experiences work their way so thoroughly into the grain of the affected community that they come to supply its prevailing mood and temper, dominate its imagery and its sense of self, and govern the way its members relate to one another.” Collective trauma thus represents both a “damage to the tissues that hold human groups intact” but also “the creation of social climates, communal moods, that come to dominate a group’s spirit” (Erikson 1995, p. 190).

As an earlier formulation of “trauma” has moved beyond its origins within a Western bio-medical model, an emphasis on the relational has become increasingly apparent. Bridging the historic gap in trauma studies between the personal/psychological and the social/structural there has been a growing body of work which moves considerations of trauma beyond and between the original bio-medical and psychological spheres to the sociological, anthropological, philosophical, historical and political (Hudnall Stamm et al. 2004; Lumsden 1997; Staub et al. 2005; Steenkamp 2005; Summerfield 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004; Volkan 1998, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2007, 2009). Similarly, a growing body of work on intergenerational legacies of trauma also moves considerations of trauma beyond and between the past, present and future spheres (Bauer 2014; Brave Heart 2003; Danieli 1998; Duran et al. 1998; Felson 1998; Lev–Wiesel 2007; Raphael, Swan & Martinek 1998; Weiss & Weiss 2000; Whitbeck et al. 2004). Another growing field, “human dignity and humiliation studies,” emphasizes the particular trauma associated with the experience of dehumanization and humiliation, which is argued to be central to acts of violence and cycles of violence (Lindner 2002, 2006). As Casper and Wertheimer (2016, p. 3) note, the unravelling of these earlier formulations by an increasingly interdisciplinary scholarship marks an epistemological shift, locating the study of trauma firmly into the humanities and social sciences and recognizing trauma “not only as a condition of broken bodies and shattered

minds, but also and primarily as a cultural object.” Whilst such unravelling is generally considered relatively recent, my reference in the preceding chapter to Francophone theorists such as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Octave Mannoni is indicative of a much older tradition. As Ward (2013) writes, the work of these theorists is evidence of the early relationship between psychological and postcolonial methods. Considering these more recent developments, a space has emerged for the resurgence of formulations of trauma in the terrain of postcolonial studies (Ward, 2013).

Such a resurgence, alongside the growing body of trauma studies more broadly, can expand our curiosity when exploring *Búmùntù* and the struggle for peace in the contemporary landscape. If as argued earlier by Praeg (2014, p. 14) “we do not only struggle to get *Ubuntu* recognised; the struggle for recognition also determines how we come to think about *Ubuntu*,” it is also possible to say that; the praxis of *ubuntu* (or *búmùntù*) impacts the struggle for peace (and the experience of violence), just as the struggle for peace (and the experience of violence) impacts the praxis of *ubuntu* (or *búmùntù*) and in turn how we come to think about *Ubuntu* (or *Búmùntù*). To express this in yet another way, I reconsider Tempels’ confession that “we have taken our share of the responsibility for having killed “the man” [the Muntu] in the Bantu,” and ask the question; does such a killing of the Muntu in the Bantu only refer to a “death” caused by the systematic and direct destruction of local ontologies as part of the colonial “mission civilisatrice?” or does it also include a more subtle and gradual “death” caused by an equally systematic but more indirect destruction of local ontologies through a more pervasive transformation of the ontological landscape on which the praxis of *búmùntù* has evolved and is expected to be enacted? And if such pervasive transformation has been fundamentally violent, marked by the triple mission of “political repression,” “economic exploitation,” and “cultural oppression,” does such a “death” also refer to a collective trauma which, beyond “a condition of broken bodies and shattered minds,” is also understood as a “cultural object?” (Casper & Wertheimer 2016, p. 3).

Almost eighty years after Tempels’ confession, I suggest that such questions may be even more pertinent in understanding the struggle for peace in a post-conflict environment, where ongoing and cumulative experiences of “regular, chronic, ordinary conditions of violence, death, exploitation, uncertainty and poverty in which individuals and groups are forced to

survive” (Beneduce et al. 2006, p. 41)<sup>55</sup> continue. It is these questions I suggest we keep in mind when hearing a similar “death” echoed in the voices of the aforementioned group of Congolese scholars writing on *Búmùntù*. Nkulu N'Sengha (2002, p. 295), for example, writes of the loss of *Búmùntù* memory: “the crisis we witness in African politics, the failure of economic development, and the widespread social corruption are due to this loss of memory about the meaning of being human.” Yanga (2010) also defends this idea, arguing that the loss of the sacred in the term *Ubuntu* is the fundamental base of the regression of black Africa. Whilst, such commentary may seem to be emphasizing the way in which the praxis of *Búmùntù* impacts on the struggle for peace, a more comprehensive reading of these works finds all the additional layers identified above. A clear connection is made in these works between such a “death” and the ontological violence of the colonial “mission civilisatrice.” Yanga (2006), applying Gobards (1979) three types of war, argues that the DRC has not only experienced war of the conventional, nor of the economic, but also, of the cultural, a war which “aims at the head to paralyse without killing, to conquer through the rotting and then enriching of the decomposition of a cultures and peoples.” Nkulu N'Sengha (2002, p. 2) describes African poverty as being a “pauvreté totale, totalisante et totalitaire;” “it is a poverty which permeates not only the whole society, but also the whole being, and weakens the soul and the intellect by affecting all the dimensions of human existence. It is both “material” and “anthropological” or “ontological” in the Greek sense of the word. It affects the being with tremendous violence, tyrannically!” Finally Muyingi (2013, p. 562), echoing the earlier expressions of collective trauma, also expresses the impact of direct violence in the postcolonial period on the central tenets of *Búmùntù/Ubuntu*, social harmony and human dignity: “Conflict in the DRC is bad because it is a conduct of disgrace. It divides the Congolese population by undermining interpersonal and social trust, above all destroying the social norms, values and institutions that have regulated and coordinated cooperation, and collective action, for the well-being of the Congolese community...Conflict disgraces human dignity and humanity.”

A dialogue on *Búmùntù* thus offers the opportunity to expand upon these perspectives, which although immensely rich are limited in the sense that they are based upon the

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<sup>55</sup> This description of the post-conflict landscape is offered by Beneduce et al. (2006, p. 41) as an argument for why conventional conceptions of “trauma” need to be amended.

philosophical enquiry of individual scholars with *a posteriori* knowledge of their own cultural contexts. By engaging in a dialogue on *Búmùntù* with individuals and communities in Kamina, this thesis offers the opportunity to enter more profoundly into both conceptions and praxis of *Búmùntù* in one contemporary ontological landscape on which the struggle for peace is enacted today.

This leads me to articulate a third and final rationale for this thesis, which is perhaps at once the simplest and most complex of all; that a dialogue on *Búmùntù* “encourages us — no, insists — that we constantly ask this question, perpetually return to it”<sup>56</sup> — how indeed do we “live in harmony with our fellow human beings?” After all, if “to be is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings,” then a dialogue on *Búmùntù* obliges us to be curious, to be creative, and to become “authentically” human. Ultimately, a dialogue on *Búmùntù* obliges us to find peace even amongst *restless and unatoned bones*.

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<sup>56</sup> I have borrowed the phrasing of this sentence from Praeg (2014, p. 29) who, although was referring to *Ubuntu*'s insistence on another question: “what is a *just* justice?” captures quite aptly this idea that the question of *Búmùntù* or *Ubuntu* is and should remain a perpetual one.

## PART TWO: IN SEARCH OF MWENDELO MUYAMPE: A GOOD WAY OF WALKING ON THE ROAD OF LIFE

In *Part One*, I emphasized the relationship between the primary themes of this work; humanness, violence, and peace, but also knowledge itself. Offering Descartes "*Cogito ergo sum*" (*I think, therefore, I am*) as just one influential moment with profound implications, I drew attention to discourses on "knowledge" as central to the history of that *enduring struggle*. Naturally, such an acknowledgement has had implications for my engagement with this thesis which is expected to make an original contribution to "knowledge." Accordingly, what it means 'to know,' what is considered as credible, reliable or valuable, the means by which, and by whom, that knowledge is discovered, produced and disseminated, and the ultimate purpose of such knowledge, have been important questions in the conceptual framing and methodological approach of this thesis. The following two chapters, together forming *Part Two*, will explore the way in which my engagement with the history of that *enduring struggle* and the central concept of *Búmùntù* has impacted on my approach. The influence of this engagement is seen not only in the questions to be asked, but also in the modalities in the asking of questions and in communicating the "answers" to questions, if they can be considered "answers" at all.<sup>57</sup>

*Chapter Four: A Dialogue on Búmùntù as an Exercise in Border Thinking* will begin with a deliberation on the ethical and practical implications of my "outsider" positionality,<sup>58</sup> the process by which I came to ground this research in the specific locale of Kamina and the implications of this on the epistemological foundations underpinning the development of this thesis. Specifically, I draw on *Bwino* epistemology as articulated by Nkulu N'Sengha (2002) alongside the earlier identified de/colonial epistemologies to articulate my approach to an engagement with *Búmùntù* as an exercise in border thinking.

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<sup>57</sup> This draws upon broader debates about international fieldwork in the midst of histories of colonialism, development, and globalization and the acknowledgement that ethical considerations are paramount and should "permeate the entire process of the research, from conceptualization to dissemination" (Sultana 2007, p. 375).

<sup>58</sup> Later in this chapter I will unpack further this "outsider" positionality, drawing on the concepts of borderlands and border thinking to draw attention to the spaces in between the insider/outsider binary.

*Chapter Five: Mwendelo Muyampe Alongside the Art of Débrouillardise* offers an account of the relational and dialogical process from which the pages that follow have emerged. Whilst I struggled initially to reconcile my engagement with *Búmùntù* and *Bwino*, the practical realities of a challenging work environment and the more conventional methodologies that I imagined were expected of me, a little piece of etymological insight offered to me by Jacques Boulet (pers. conv., 2014) provided a particularly useful framing for my approach. The term “method” has its origin in the Greek words μετά (metá, meaning “after” “pursuit” or “quest”) + ὁδός (hodós, meaning “a way” or a “path, track, road, journey;” together, they simply denote the search for a way (Hoad 1996). Throughout the course of my investigations, this search has in turn aligned itself with the Luba ethic of *Mwendelo Muyampe* (a good way of walking on the road of life) or *Mwikadilo muyampe* (a good way of being in the world); this is to say that my engagement with *Búmùntù* has guided me to place the basic ethic of attempting to become “authentically human” at the forefront of this search (“attempting” being the operative word!). The methodology described in the following two chapters is, therefore, best understood as one attempt to find a “good way of walking,” a process that has gradually unfolded, the twists and bends of which have resulted in successes and failures and which has, in turn, made possible the collection of dialogues offered in *Part Three: An Assemblage of Relational and Dialogical Encounters*.

## CHAPTER FOUR: A DIALOGUE ON BÚMUNTÙ AS AN EXERCISE IN BORDER THINKING

*Don't talk about what you don't know" caution Elders.*

*I Challenge widely held Eurocentric notions.*

*White "experts" can Not*

*Should Not study Others*

*Ultimately speak for*

*on behalf of Us*

*(Graveline 2000, p. 362)*

The above cautioning from Fyre Jean Graveline, a Métis (Cree) activist and scholar is an important beginning point in this search for a “good way of walking.” Although arising from the First Nations experience in the Canadian context, it raises a fundamental question equally pertinent to this thesis. As a “white” researcher, based over 12,000kms away from the individuals and communities whose struggle for peace is the primary concern of this thesis, am I (both ethically and practically speaking) in a position to undertake this research at all? It is a pertinent question given the history of that *enduring struggle* I have traced. The voices of (the fictional) Charles Marlow and the (very real) missionary Père Placide Tempels have both provided concrete examples of the problematic associated with the “white” “outsider” studying the “Other” and speaking for, on behalf of, or even about, those “Others.” Thankfully, as a result of this history, the question of what it means to do research, the positionality from which such a task is undertaken and whose benefit it ultimately serves has been the subject of intense scrutiny within the social sciences. According to Lal (1999, p. 185) it is precisely this deep-rooted foundationalism resting on “an essential division between “Self” and “Other,” or between the knowing subject (the researcher) and the known, or soon-to-be-known, object (the researched)” which has been most called into question as part of such a collective interrogation. It is also as part of such a collective interrogation that the aforementioned “anchor of decolonial epistemologies” has been proposed: “I am, where I do and where I think” or its simpler form “I am where I think”

(Mignolo 1999, 2000, 2002, 2007, 2011; Mignolo & Escobar 2010; Mignolo & Tlostanova 2006). I considered this formulation in the preceding chapter to support the argument for my engagement with *Búmùntù*. I now return to place myself within the history of an *enduring struggle* and consider the implications of de/colonial epistemologies for my own process as a “white” “outsider” attempting to engage with the concept of *Búmùntù* in the context of the DRC. As stated earlier, drawing from Bhattacharya (2009), I use the term de/colonial in recognition of a symbiotic relationship between colonizing discourses and the resistance against such discourses whereby it is impossible to detach one from the other.

I have begun then, with Graveline’s cautioning, in recognition of the fact that my very engagement in this research is evidence itself of the *imperial duress* and the ineffable connectivities joining colonial pasts to postcolonial presents; for example, I have not as yet met a Congolese doctoral candidate based in a Congolese institution who has relatively casually decided to take on an Australian social problem as their topic of study. Indeed, it is worth reflecting on the improbability that such a candidate could feel entitled to pursue such a study in spite of limitations in English proficiency, and still be financially supported to undertake a number of short-term field trips to Australia, after which he/she would become qualified to comment on the problem. In light of such vast inequalities and contradictions persisting today, I do share an affinity with Graveline’s above call to embrace First Voice as Methodology.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, in the context of the DRC, where even “wounds and corpses” have failed to speak (Chiwengo 2008) — where even the stories of atrocities, massacres, rapes, and the mass displacement of populations have struggled to garner international attention, there is also a strong case against a disengagement of “outsider” researchers brought about by an over-concern about positionality and fears of (mis)representation and (in)authenticity (Nagar 2002; Sultana 2007). Ultimately, then, rather than as a call for my own disengagement, I take this as a call for a more profound

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<sup>59</sup> There are numerous scholars who have cautioned about the ethics of “white” “outsiders” researching within colonized, marginalized and/or disempowered communities. These concerns have been increasingly raised by Indigenous communities within my own country of Australia, as well as New Zealand, Canada, and the USA. For the most part these concerns have resulted in the desire to negotiate new relationships with non-indigenous researchers, developing partnerships with indigenous researchers and developing decolonizing methodologies, however in some contexts this also involves restrictions on non-indigenous researchers with the view that indigenous researchers are better placed to conduct such research. See Aveling (2012), Graveline (2000) and Tuhiwai Smith (1999).

engagement; to recognize the history of an *enduring struggle* and its impact on the research relationship and in line with this, to strive for a research approach based on the full recognition of “the body and flesh of ‘the stranger’ as flesh and body just like mine” (Mbembe 2001, p. 2). In this chapter, I present my approach to such an engagement, which takes the form of a dialogue on *Búmùntù* as an exercise in border thinking, a process that I suggest should be considered relevant and necessary for us all to engage in.

### *FROM THE DESK OF AN “OUTSIDER” ACADEMIC*

In my personal preface to this thesis, I described my own entanglements in the DRC, suggesting that my own presence within this work and the presence of my daughter, is indicative of the ripple effects of violence across both the spatial (from DRC to Australia) and the temporal (from past to present to future). In light of this, the description of myself as a “white” “outsider” confirmed by the above heading “*from the desk of an “outsider” academic*” might seem unnecessarily reductionist. Certainly, it does not capture the “complexities, contradictions and (im)possibilities” of the insider/outsider binary (Jankie 2004, p. 103) already alluded to by these personal entanglements. Nor, does it capture the fundamental recognition of “a common human nature, a humanity shared with others” (Mbembe 2001, p. 2) on which this research approach is based. And yet, when reflecting on the above formulation “I am, where I do and where I think” I still begin from this particular location to highlight the reality that a large part of my own identity is bound up in (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions critiqued in the preceding chapters. In doing so, I also emphasize the reality that this is not a research project that has its origins in Kamina. Whilst I share an ideological accord with the argument of Fine (2013) that “it is those people who know in their bellies the pain, the resilience, and the strength of what it takes to live an injustice that deserve the right to shape the research questions about and for their communities” (Decolonizing Knowledges 2013), the reality is that this doctoral thesis has been initiated from “outside.” Indeed, in the beginning stages of my doctoral candidature, I was not even aware of the existence of a city named Kamina in the Haut-Lomami province, let alone knowing personally the many individuals and communities whose struggle for peace is central to this thesis. Before turning to articulate the epistemological

foundations that underpinned the development of this thesis, I will first describe a process of coming into relation, as it is such a process that provides the context for this engagement.

As already stated, early formulations of this research project were not grounded in a specific locale, nor did they have a focus on *Búmùntù*. Instead, influenced by my engagement with discourses of healing and reconciliation within the Aboriginal Australian context, I sought to examine the Congolese experience of complex intergenerational trauma and consider the intersection between healing and peace practices. It was through a relational and dialogical process that this began to shift. I shared many enlightening conversations via email, via skype and face-to-face, for which my connections in the diaspora community in Melbourne, Australia provided opportunities. A little office at a local Migrant Resource Centre where I began to frequent, part scholar, part client and part family member, became my most influential and precious space for “*le rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir*” (the encounter of giving and receiving.)<sup>60</sup> Here, I would spend hours at a time absorbed and often confused by the myriad of stories that fluidly rolled off the tongue of good friend and mentor, Clovis Mwamba. Although I was vaguely familiar with *Ubuntu* in the South African context, it was through these conversations that I was introduced to *Búmùntù* in the Congolese context. It was also through these conversations that *Búmùntù* and its relationship to the struggle for peace began to cement itself as a central part of my research interests.

It was not until eight months into my candidature that the possibilities of grounding my research in a specific locale began to emerge. This was made possible, as described earlier, by my discovery of the work of Prof. Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha, Professor at the University of California, who at the time, appeared as the lone figure in my online searches for academic literature on *Búmùntù* in the context of the DRC.<sup>61</sup> It was an interest in his academic work on the potential of this paradigm in explicating an African Theology of Human Rights, and more importantly his ongoing work to establish the *Búmùntù Peace Institute*, an institute with a vision to promote peace through education, research and development projects embedded in the notion of *Búmùntù* (the base of which in the DRC is Kamina) which led me to contact him. It was also through his articulation of “*Bwino*” epistemology, which will be discussed

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<sup>60</sup> As stated earlier, this is a reference to Léopold Senghor, founder of the Négritude movement.

<sup>61</sup> Over time I have discovered a number of other scholars, namely Yanga (2006) and Muyingi (2013).

later, that I began to consider how the ontological landscape forming the subject of this thesis may also influence its epistemological foundations and methodology. Through a series of exchanges over email across a period of eight months, I was able to consult with Prof. Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha and was also introduced to a wider network of individuals connected to Kamina. This included Rev. Pamela Couture, at the University of Toronto who had been conducting research into peacemaking and reconciliation practices of rural United Methodist community in and around Kamina following the Congo wars. She, in turn, introduced me to Rev. John Mutombo and Rev. Ilgha Monga Ilunga, also from the United Methodist community, who, although originally from Kamina were now undertaking doctoral studies in the United States. Through dialogue with these individuals, I was able to slowly graft this work in the specific locale of Kamina. Both Prof. Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha and Rev. Pamela Couture were instrumental in connecting me with the late Rev. Boniface Kabongo Ilunga under the leadership of Bishop Ntambo Nkulu Ntanda and the United Methodist Community in Kamina more broadly. It was through their invitation and support that I was able to organize a preliminary one-month field trip to Kamina in June-July 2014, later followed by a five-month field trip from July-November 2015.

As can be seen from this account, the choice of Kamina as a locale for this study was largely serendipitous and developed over time. Whilst not immediately apparent, the fortuitousness of this particular locale revealed itself over the course of my research. I was not, for example, previously aware that Tempels’ famed 1945 *Bantu Philosophy* had arisen through his engagement with the *Baluba* in and around the diocese of Kamina; nor even, at a more personal level, was I aware that just outside Kamina I would find myself standing with my five-year-old daughter (whose cultural ancestry is Luba-Kasai) at a statue of *Mbidi Kiluwe*, the most revered ancestor of the Luba whose story is told in the popular Luba genesis myth. Echoing my own experience, I will leave a more comprehensive explication of the relevance of Kamina as a site for exploring the struggle for peace to *Chapter Six*, where I will welcome you, the reader, to Kamina to offer a more grounded experience of the terrain. For now, my focus remains on the way in which this process of coming into relation impacts on the epistemological foundations of this thesis.

I am not Luba. I cannot engage with the concept of *Búmùntù* as a Luba. On the other hand,

in seeking to engage with the question of what it means 'to be' from a Luba perspective, nor does it seem appropriate to remain rooted within my own geo-political location and allow it to determine how I approach the question of what it means 'to know.' How then can I allow the ontological landscape in which this study is located to influence my own way of thinking about the subject at hand, simultaneously acknowledging my own locus? How, also, might I do this in a way that does not violently misappropriate a tradition that is not my own and that I am just gradually coming into relation with? My attempts to respond to these questions have led me to the approach of border thinking.

### ***BORDER THINKING IN A BORDERLANDS: "WE ARE, WHERE WE DO AND WHERE WE THINK"***

In her influential 1987 publication *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Anzaldúa (1999) powerfully captured her own experience as a Chicana-tejana-lesbian-feminist activist, poet, theorist, and fiction writer growing up on the US (South Texas)-Mexican border. Describing this geographic location in her work, she writes that "the U.S-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* [is an open wound] where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it haemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country — a border culture" (Anzaldúa 1999, p. 3) The term borderlands thus represents a space where hybrid identities are formed and where as a result, polarities can be more easily challenged and dissolved. Whilst the US-Mexican border provides the tangible territorial border division, it is more so the intangible that Anzaldúa's work speaks to; from such a space, divisions of the first world and the third world, non-Latinas/os and Latinas/os, men and women, heterosexual and homosexual and other such binaries can be challenged. In the absence, then, of the tangible territorial border division the borderlands metaphor can be equally relevant in reflecting on the contemporary global reality, described earlier, where "even the most circumscribed of locales is set within a larger context of international influences, indelibly changing both the character of the local and the translocal" (Nordstrom 1997, p. 37). Before even entering into a consideration of such hybrid identities in Kamina itself, the understanding "that we all occupy multiple and fluid locations" (Lal 1999, p. 186) has already been alluded to in relation to my own positionality.

The proposed epistemological implications of such borderlands spaces are significant.

According to Vargas-Monroy:

border lands are a place of instability. In contrast to the canons of western thought, which look for the certainties of differentiations and which construct their own imagery from identities based on these differentiations, the border land appears as undetermined, a place which is constantly in transition and which produces a feeling of unease. In this way, if illustrated science generates strong and established binary logics, subversion arises with the promise of the territories of transition and borders (Vargas-Monroy 2011, p. 4).

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to enter more profoundly into such an argument.

However, the suggestion found here is that within such spaces a transitory potential exists to promote the aforementioned shift of the modern foundation of knowledge characterized by the universality of a theo- and ego- politics of knowledge to a geo- and body- politics of knowledge (Mignolo 2011). And through such a shift, one may just begin to witness the historic “monoculture of scientific knowledge” being replaced by an “ecology of knowledges” (de Sousa Santos 2014).

This returns us to the formulation: “I am, where I do and where I think” as an “anchor of decolonial epistemologies” and the notion of border thinking which was earlier introduced in Chapter Three. By obliging us to become conscious of the “air that we breathe” (Mignolo 1999, p. 237), the way in which our being, thoughts and actions are geo-politically located, this formulation can assist in opening up spaces for alternatives to be heard. In line with Graveline’s cautioning, this shift naturally includes a questioning of which voices, from which geo-political locations, should take prominence in research in colonized, marginalized and/or disempowered communities. Given, however, the recognition of the borderlands spaces that characterize our contemporary global landscape and the many hybrid identities emanating from such spaces, we must go beyond the simple question of “who” is given voice.

What are the implications of the formulation “I am, where I do and where I think” in the context of the relational and dialogical encounter across multiple and fluid locations? What

are the implications, for example, in the context of our dialogue in one of the most remote villages which I visited during my time in Kamina, a location where I may have been inclined to anticipate the most “authentic” account of the Luba “tradition,” potentially less influenced by the broader global context? This was also a location where I more likely could imagine myself as an “outsider;” but, it was also a location to which I had been invited by a member of my own faith community, the Bahá’í faith. In this case, the Luba chief of this village, and I, a Greek/Australian researcher with a daughter of Luba/Greek/Australian heritage, were connected by a religious movement arising in mid-nineteenth century Iran. As just another example for reflection, what are the implications in the context of my dialogue with a group of young academics in Kamina, a dialogue driven by my desire to consider the implications of Luba epistemology on research methodologies? It was a question arising from “outside” Kamina, motivated by the movement to decolonise knowledges occurring in the Australian post-colonial context, as well as from the work of Congolese scholars in the diaspora. Inside Kamina, however, from this group of young academics, I was specifically told that “science is science,” knowledge which is “demonstrable and justifiable and verifiable” (Group dialogue #21, August, 2015). Referring to the history of Luba knowledge, one of these academics suggested “we had culture” but “we were nothing, we were *“kintu”* (objects) in the world of science...we are humble, where someone merits it, one must applaud them. The white man is excessively in advance to that of the black man in respect of the field of science” (Group dialogue #21, August, 2015).

In light of such examples, is it possible to consider that through a relational and dialogical encounter, we might begin to envision an alternative formulation like “we are, where we do and where we think?” For the remainder of this chapter, I will articulate my approach to this thesis as an attempt to draw from *Bwino* epistemology as formulated by Nkulu N'Sengha (2002). Through the consideration of “*Border thinking in a borderlands: we are, where we do and where we think*” I hope to have established the understanding that I do not engage with *Bwino* epistemology as a Luba, nor do I engage with it solely from my own geo-political location. Instead, I attempt to engage with it alongside individuals and communities who equally belong to borderlands spaces and to whom border thinking is an inevitable part of their everyday reality in an ontological landscape in which multiple modes of “being-in-the-world” are constantly being negotiated. The specific reformulation of Mignolo’s (2011) “I

am” into the plural “we are” acknowledges this fact as well as the ontological statements “I am, because we are” or “to be is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings.” In line with this, beyond the call for a shift from the “monoculture of scientific knowledge” to an “ecology of knowledges,” (de Sousa Santos 2014) this is also suggestive of the call for knowledges created through relational and dialogical processes (Frank 2005, 2012). To borrow the words of Freire (2006, p. 89), such dialogues are “among women and men who name the world, it must not be a situation where some name on behalf of others. It is an act of creation; it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another. The domination implicit in dialogue is that of the world by the dialoguers; it is conquest of the world for the liberation of humankind.” A more contemporary articulation of a similar sentiment can be found in de Sousa Santos (2014, p. 12): “there are many knowledges looking for people eager to know them,” let us then, “squander no knowledges that might help us in our struggle to live well.”<sup>62</sup> It is with such a sentiment, that I turn now to articulate how I have drawn upon *Bwino* epistemology.

### *'BWINO' EPISTEMOLOGY: TRUE KNOWLEDGE IS TO LIVE IN HARMONY*

“*Bwino*” meaning “knowledge” in the Kiluba language is a concept representing the most holistic and highest form of knowledge (within a spectrum of varying forms of knowledge) (Nkulu N'Sengha 2002). According to Nkulu N'Sengha (2002), it is a knowledge which is at once the product of human inquiry and of disciplined search for truth, at the same time maintaining ethical and aesthetic qualities which give a sense of purpose and direction. “Knowledge” thus becomes “knowledge with conscience,” a knowledge focused on the flourishing of human kind. Deconstructing the Luba proverb: “*Bwino bonso ke Bwino, Bwino I*

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<sup>62</sup> These words are taken from de Sousa Santos (2014, p. 12) *Manifesto for Good Living* in which he invokes the imagined collective voice of the “South.” The full quote reads as: “Our knowledge flies at low altitude because it is stuck to the body. We feel-think and feel-act. To think without passion is to make coffins for ideas; to act without passion is to fill the coffins. We are voracious in getting the diversity of the knowledges we are interested in. There are many knowledges looking for people eager to know them. We squander no knowledges that might help us in our struggle to live well. We mix knowledges and combine them according to logics that are not limited to them. We do not want authors’ copyrights; we want to be authors of rights. Our kind of knowledge is existential and experiential; it is therefore both resilient and flexible, disturbed by all that happens to us.”

*kwikala ne Bantu*” (All knowledge is not knowledge, true knowledge is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings) Nkulu N'Sengha (2002, p. 157) sheds light on this epistemology.

*Bwino ke Bwino*

(Knowledge is not knowledge)

*Bwino I kwikala*

(Knowledge is to be)

*Kwikala I (Kwikala) biya*

(to be is to be well, in harmony)

*Kwikala I (Kwikala) ne*

(to be is to be with)

*Kwikala I (Kwikala biya ne) Bantu*

(to be is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings)

*Bwino I (kwikala) biya*

(knowledge is to be good, to be in harmony)

*Bwino I (kwikala biya) ne Bantu*

(knowledge is to be well with our fellow human beings)

As the above breakdown illustrates, one finds the statement: “*Kwikala I (Kwikala biya ne) Bantu*” (“to be” is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings) (my emphasis added) located within the proverb. It was this statement that I used in the opening introduction of this thesis to represent one condensed form of *Búmùntù* appearing to place peace (expressed more often as social harmony) as the defining characteristic of our humanness. In the context of the full proverb, according to Nkulu N'Sengha (2002, pp. 157-162) this

statement represents one of the core principles of *Bwino* epistemology, the principle of relationality, connecting the explication of epistemology with the concept of *Búmùntù*. I now explore three Luba proverbs drawn on by Nkulu N'Sengha (2002), to articulate the *Bwino* epistemological perspective and show how they have influenced the approach to knowledge taken in this thesis.

Firstly, I begin with: *Mwana wipangula ye umva* (A child who raises questions is the one who gains understanding and genuine knowledge); according to Nkulu N'Sengha (2002), this proverb speaks to knowledge as the “art of unknowing.” The process of deconstructing false knowledge, distortions, prejudices, and mere rumours, in order to gain genuine knowledge. Found also in the first part of the earlier proverb, “*Bwino ke Bwino*” ([all] knowledge is not [true] knowledge), it points to the principle of critical thinking and defines the process of philosophical inquiry through the ability to raise questions that challenge conventional truths. Concerning the highest level of knowledge, the knowledge of sages, it is not the accumulation or reciting of information which is valued, but instead the “capacity to raise crucial questions, to find solutions to important questions of life, and to use knowledge to enhance human flourishing” (Nkulu N'Sengha 2002, p. 161). This thesis takes part in the “art of unknowing,” in the sense that it is both a critique and an advance of knowledge. As a critique, it is an intervention in the dominant discourses on humanness, violence and peace in the DRC. The challenge and disruption of the “conventional truth,” and the deconstruction of dehumanizing narratives, has been the focus of the earlier chapters of this thesis. In this way, it can be seen as part of a project of “delinking” or “changing the terms of the conversation,” a project which according to Mignolo (2007) comes alongside border thinking. This process of challenging thus creates an opening to ask the questions anew from an alternate perspective, leading to an inductive process of knowledge generation whereby the responses that arise from questioning anew will generate the theories (Bryman 2004, p. 266).

As the proverb suggests using the metaphor of the “child,” it is the “art of unknowing” which enables such a generative space; The metaphor of the “child” can be applied to two aspects of my approach. First, as an “outsider” acknowledging that “I am, where I do and where I think,” I can attempt to be like a child who is experiencing the ontological landscape of Kamina for the first time. Unlike the “outsider” as the “expert” or the “detached and neutral

point of observation” critiqued above, the “outsider” as “child” infers the inquisitive nature of one who is not yet initiated to the various social and cultural constructions that make up that landscape. This inquisitive nature can assist in raising questions that may elucidate deeper understandings of what may otherwise remain unconscious assumptions. A child cannot be “blind to the ordinary” as the ordinary is naturally extraordinary to the child (Chavez 2008).<sup>63</sup> Beyond myself as the “child,” however, I suggest that the metaphor can also refer to the exercise of border thinking; as an “epistemology of the exteriority,” (Mignolo & Tlostanova 2006, p. 206) the very act of thinking from the border infers the positioning of the “child” that raises questions that challenge the conventional truth. Having argued that an engagement with *Búmùntù* itself is an exercise in border thinking, in the pages to come this will be extended further. The attempt to engage in an “epistemology of the exteriority” includes the attempt to invite a diverse array of voices into the dialogue, including those that experience marginalization, exclusion and “Other-ing” in Kamina today. This will include the voices of women, ethnic “Others,” and those associated with “traditional” religious beliefs and practices. This is important as in *Part Three: An Assemblage of Relational and Dialogical Encounters*, the inclusion of these voices continually results in the contest of “conventional truths,” resulting in more fluid and nuanced understandings that can transcend and transform boundaries.

The second proverb: *Kuboko kumo kubunga ke kololanga* (one single hand cannot apprehend many things); according to Nkulu N'Sengha (2002) expresses a strong support for a multidisciplinary approach, one which acknowledges reality as a complex entity and espouses a holistic epistemology integrating multiple perspectives and ways of knowing. In the preceding chapters, numerous arguments for such holistic approaches have been given<sup>64</sup> and will also be evident in the following chapter describing the evolving relational and dialogical approach. This positions the *Bwino* epistemological perspective alongside other postcolonial

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<sup>63</sup> “Blindness to the ordinary” is often considered a risk of ‘insider’ positionality.

<sup>64</sup> This is in, for example, the recognition of the need for more complex and nuanced explanations of the human relationship with violence and peace that consider the biological and psychological spheres, as well as the historical, sociological, anthropological, philosophical and political spheres. It has also been present in the argument for the “monoculture of scientific knowledge” to be replaced by an “ecology of knowledges” (de Sousa Santos 2014). The integration of multiple perspectives and ways of knowing was also present in the previous discussion of my attempt to invite a diverse array of voices into the dialogue as part of a thinking from the *borders*.

indigenous research paradigms asserting that knowledge is something “socially constructed by people who have relationships and connections with each other, the living and the nonliving, and the environment” (Chilisa 2012, p. 117).

Taking this proverb further to consider not only the multiple perspectives and ways of knowing that exist around us, but also within us, Nkulu N'Sengha (2002) introduces the concept of “*Kachima Mulango*” (the thinking heart) asserting that true knowledge, or “knowledge-wisdom,” is gained not only with the head but also with the heart. In this way, the act of knowing is not conceived as a process of fragmentation, but is instead a process of integration involving at once “the intellect, emotional intelligence, imagination, and the purpose of the very act of knowing” (Nkulu N'Sengha 2002, p. 132). There is a particularly powerful rationale for such an epistemological perspective given the earlier tracing of an *enduring struggle*; according to Nkulu N'Sengha (2002, p. 137) from this perspective one finds a rejection of the “absolutization of a disembodied reason,” a “reductionist way of thinking which atrophies human intelligence and blinds the spirit to various dimensions of the object of study.” Importantly, such a critique is not exclusive to the *Bwino* epistemological perspective, nor to the more recent “decolonial turn” as described earlier.<sup>65</sup> Not only is an integrated and embodied knowledge viewed as a more accurate understanding of who we are as beings-in-the-world, it is also argued to be crucial in overcoming some of the most urgent contemporary crises of our times.<sup>66</sup> Returning to the above proverb, to recognize that

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<sup>65</sup> The “dangerous estrangement” of scientific knowledge from our direct and active participation as living, feeling, thinking and indeed relational beings in the world-of-life was brought to the fore by Husserl and the inauguration of the philosophical discipline of phenomenology in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the relevance of this same struggle today, Abram (1996, p. 34) writes that “our spontaneous experience of the world, charged with subjective, emotional, and intuitive content, remains the vital and dark ground of all our objectivity,” even if it largely unacknowledged in a society that “places a premium on certainty.” Feminist scholars too, have been instrumental in criticizing the marginalization and sublimation of the embodied self in western thought and in calling for the recognition of the knowing subject as a social, embodied, interested, emotional and rational being (Jaggar 1989; Jaggar & Bordo 1989; Philipose 2007). Even developments within the field of cognitive science, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1999, p. 3), tell us that an “empirically responsible philosophy would require our culture to abandon some of its deepest philosophical assumptions.” Reason, according to them, is not dispassionate, but it is emotionally engaged; it is not only literal, but also largely metaphorical and imaginative; it is not only conscious, but for the most part unconscious; indeed “the structure of reason itself comes from the details of our embodiment” (Lakoff & Johnson 1999, p. 4).

<sup>66</sup> Abram (1996), for example, argues its relevance in overcoming our increasingly precarious ecological state of wellbeing. Philipose (2007) argues its relevance in addressing the use of violence for political ends. She focuses specifically on the emotional impairment of the “neoliberal, colonial self of the western world,” arguing that it is precisely our capacity to engage our emotional selves in the recognition of the

“one single hand cannot apprehend many things,” is to reject the idea of myself as the “detached and neutral point of observation,” disincorporated from the “known” or the “Other.” Instead, it is to embrace the “I” in its fullest sense; an intellectual, emotional, imaginative, purposive and most of all relational self.

Lastly, concluding the exploration of the *Bwino* epistemological perspective, I return to the original proverb: *Bwino bonso ke bwino, bwino I kwikala biya ne bantu* (all knowledge is not knowledge, true knowledge is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings). It is this proverb which most directly demonstrates its dependence on the ontological landscape within which it exists. As Nkulu N'Sengha (2002) asserts according to the “*Bwino*” epistemological perspective there is no value of knowledge for knowledge’s sake, instead there is an attached intentionality and purposiveness which is intimately bound up in the central theme of *Búmùntù*. Importantly, the framing of this proverb points not only to knowledge as a product or outcome, but also as a “way of being,” and thus to a process. As process, it forces us to ask the pertinent question earlier raised: “is peace research necessarily a peaceful activity?” (Galtung n.d). For this reason I stated earlier that my engagement with *Búmùntù* has obliged me to place the basic ethic of *attempting to “become”* an “authentic Person” at the forefront of this search, so that the search for appropriate “methods” has aligned itself to the Luba ethic of *Mwendelo Muyampe* (a good way of walking on the road of life). It is such a process that undergirds the exploration in the following chapter. It was also the most powerful factor in guiding the ultimate purpose of this thesis; according to Nkulu N'Sengha (2002), to know in the sense of “*Bwino*” is to “build the world,” it is to increase the quality of life of the individual and the community as a whole. This is in line with the increasing recognition of the need for research into human suffering to move beyond a limited ethic of ‘do no harm,’ instead moving towards the ending of that suffering (Jacobsen & Landau 2003, p. 186). It was, in fact, one of the factors which influenced a significant shift during the early stages of my candidature from a project whose primary focus was the problem of historical trauma and cycles of violence, to a project whose primary focus has become *Búmùntù* and the struggle for peace. Whilst the theme of the enduring legacies of colonialism and imperialism remains, such themes now exist alongside

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emotions of “others” that contributes to a mutual recognition of a shared humanity, and in turn to ending of violence.

the recognition of existing strengths and resilience, so that “*duress*” appears alongside the capacity to “*endure*” in the face of such duress. Similarly, whilst earlier formations of this project shared the language of the apologetic discourses in African Philosophy — of rediscovery, reclamation, renewal, renaissance — the idea of knowledge making as a “building the world” has encouraged a more forward-thinking vision. Rather than being aligned with the larger movement backwards, the reinvention of Africa and its relationship to the world through the retelling of the African story, a necessary process “for overcoming the phase of humiliation and existential anguish caused by the historical debasement of the continent” (Mbembe 2002, p. 256) as this work has progressed I have been drawn towards the value and worth of a project which seeks not to reimagine the past but instead to draw from a past in order to reimagine the future. Questions about the “authenticity” of expressions of *Búmùntù*, the extent to which they “truly” reflect the Luba “tradition,” the extent to which they accurately represent the past have become far less important than the basic question of how do we create and maintain peace. By placing the concept of *Búmùntù* and the ontological statement: “*Kwikala I (Kwikala biya ne) Bantu*” (“to be” is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings) at the centre of the thesis, I have established the pursuit of peace as the central purpose of this project. Articulated as a central “research question,” it has become the impossible question of “how on earth do we live in harmony with our fellow human beings?” or indeed “how on earth can we become authentically human?”

### *A MOVEMENT TOWARDS KNOWING*

This chapter has deliberated on ethical and practical implications of my own “outsider” positionality, the process by which I came to ground this research in the specific locale of Kamina, and the implications of this on the epistemological foundations that have underpinned the development of this thesis. Specifically, I have described my engagement with *Bwino* epistemology as articulated by Nkulu N'Sengha (2002) alongside earlier identified de/colonial epistemologies. Together, they have introduced a dialogue on *Búmùntù* as an exercise in border thinking. This is significant; rather than choosing to present this doctoral thesis as a “claim to knowledge,” the notion of an “exercise” is suggestive of a more creative,

imaginative process, a movement towards “knowing” which opens possibilities. This framing reminds the reader that the pages which follow tell just one story of how “researcher and participant came together in some shared time and space and had diverse effects on each other” (Frank 2005, p. 968). It is one moment in the development of an ever-evolving story where “the meaning of any present story depends on the stories it will generate. One story calls forth another, both from the storyteller him or herself, and from the listener/recipient of the story. The point of any present story is its potential for revision and redistribution in future stories” (Frank 2005, p. 967). It is with this in mind that I now move towards an articulation of the relational and dialogical process from which the pages that follow have emerged.

## CHAPTER FIVE: MWENDELO MUYAMPE ALONGSIDE THE ART OF DÉBROUILLARDISE

In the introduction to *Part Two*, I described how a consideration of the etymology of the term “method,” accompanied by the Luba ethic of *Mwendelo Muyampe* (a good way of walking on the road of life), led me to an understanding of “method” as a search for a “good way of walking.” In line with this, in this chapter I articulate the particular road that unfolded and the many twists and bends which emerged along the way. This chapter is divided in three parts, beginning with an account of my initial welcome into Kamina by Prof. Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha and the United Methodist Community, which expanded into a broader web of networks. I describe how the early stages of connection during my preliminary field trip to Kamina in June-July 2014 were aimed at transforming what began as an essentially researcher-centric project developed from the “outside” into something embodied as a more concrete and formalized collective, collaborative and local vision arising from within Kamina itself. Whilst this suggests a gradual evolution from soliloquy to dialogue, it also establishes how the imagined “ideal” approach has repeatedly been negotiated around the many practical constraints that arose. In doing so, I establish the metaphor of research as a search for *mwendelo muyampe* (a good way of walking on the road of life) alongside the art of *débrouillardise* (resourcefulness). This metaphor is used to explicate the particular relational and dialogical approach that evolved in the course of my second and more extensive field trip and which generated the majority of “data” from which the latter chapters of this thesis are drawn. Finally, I articulate the various choices I have made in drawing together and making sense of that “data” into an attempted cohesive whole presented to you in *Part Three: An Assemblage of Relational and Dialogical Encounters*. This chapter thus intends and hopes to prepare you, the reader, towards a better understanding of the context and process resulting in the final chapters of this thesis.

## *FROM SOLILOQUY TO DIALOGUE*

As stated earlier, whilst this research project was initiated from the “outside,” I agree with the argument that “it is those people who know in their bellies the pain, the resilience, and the strength of what it takes to live an injustice that deserve the right to shape the research questions about and for their communities” (DataCenter 2013). Whilst I always intended to organise an extended field trip, my one-month preliminary stay in Kamina intended to establish connections with “those people” as well as check out more practical constraints. Not having a real sense of Kamina as a working/living environment nor prior relationships with individuals and communities there, I was not sure whether it would be possible or appropriate to take my then four-year-old daughter to live there for such an extended period of time. So I wanted to assess the possibilities of an extended field trip, develop relationships with individuals and communities and conduct initial dialogues with local academics and community leaders which could assist in shaping and guiding research questions and approach. I was particularly keen to develop a more genuine and formalized collective, collaborative and local vision emerging from within Kamina itself, but the ambiguity surrounding the possibilities of a subsequent extended field trip also impelled me to frame the initial consultation dialogues as an opportunity to collect some preliminary “data.” This establishes a theme that will become more pronounced in this chapter: the ongoing tension between a rigid and planned “work-centred” research process and a fluid and flexible “person-centred” one.

On my first arrival to Kamina the United Methodist Community welcomed me and graciously hosted me in their guest house, apparently one of the few “appropriate” accommodation options for local and international NGO staff, academics, missionaries and politicians temporarily passing through Kamina on various projects. I had the good fortune to receive the support, security and relentless hospitality of this community. Whilst my intention was to tread softly and humbly during this initial field trip, the spirit in which I was welcomed resulted in a more dynamic thrust forward; news of my arrival had already spread to numerous individuals. Fabrice Ilunga, a local assistant in the Methodist Community, had been asked to assist me both in organizing meetings and as an interpreter. Many initial dialogues were with local academics and community leaders whom I had intended to meet,

but many extended into less familiar territory. I was taken to speak with a group of Notables of the Luba Royal Court with Prof. Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha facilitating the dialogue; a diviner was invited to visit me in the Guest House where I was staying, a meeting that became a group dialogue when a close friend of Prof. Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha joined the dialogue after a spontaneous social visit; I set off on a trek around local villages, overseeing three students from the Institut Supérieur de Pédagogie (ISP) of Kamina; in search of the voices of Elders they ended up facilitating community dialogues with large crowds curious to know what a “*Muzungu*” (white person) was doing travelling through their villages. Whilst I was unprepared for some of these encounters, one might say that I embraced the famous Congolese art of *débrouillardise* (resourcefulness), or, as Wild-Wood (2007, p. 368) describes it in the context of research, I embraced “the art of resourcefulness which leads to serendipity.” As Wild-Wood (2007) argues, such process of flexibility, adaptability and openness to emergent insights and realities can assist in abandoning a rigid and planned “work-centred” research process, instead adopting a fluid and flexible “person-centred” research process, constantly being shaped and adapted by the relationships around and by taking opportunities as they arise.

I borrow the metaphor of research as *débrouillardise* (resourcefulness) because it captures a certain reality about the systems of relationships that dramatically shape the research process, whether it be the family responsibilities of the researcher, or time pressures from the university, or the engagement of individuals and communities with whom the research occurs. Importantly, whilst Wild-Wood (2007) uses the term in a more positive sense, I will apply it in a more nuanced way. In fact, the concept of *débrouillardise* (resourcefulness) carries a more negative connotation in the Congolese context. Its more common form “*Débrouillez-Vous*” (Fend for yourself) entrenched itself into Congolese popular culture during the Mobutu era.<sup>67</sup> This implicit social pact between the state and its citizens provided individuals the scope to do whatever was necessary to survive in the midst of the economic

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<sup>67</sup> In fact, the term has earlier origins dating back to Congolese independence and the unrecognized secessionist state of South Kasai. Faced with a large influx of internally displaced people and little infrastructure to support them, Albert Kalonji leader of the Mouvement National Congolais-Kalonji (MNC-K), was said to have added an additional article to the constitution, which was given verbally to his people. Article 15: *Débrouillez-vous* (fend for yourself/cope/manage) which encouraged people in the region to “*kobeta libanga*” (break rocks) making ends meet through the informal exploitation of this diamond rich region.

crisis. The concept has remained in contemporary times. In some areas and situations, it has even been argued to have shifted its character from a social pact to the unconditional rule of individual behaviour characterized by individualism, opportunism and even predatory behaviour (Beneduce et al. 2006; Devisch 1998; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004). In stark contrast to Wild-Wood's usage, research as the art of *débrouillardise* may equally be applied as a metaphor speaking to the *enduring* history of the scientific study of "Others" and an imperialist model of knowledge extraction which one could argue has equally been characterized by individualism, opportunism and even predatory behaviour. Indeed, the end of my preliminary field trip left a mixed feeling for me; on the one hand, I had adopted a fluid and flexible "person-centred" research process largely guided by my host; and yet, that was not the research process I had envisioned in my contemplations on *mwendelo muyampe* (a good way of walking on the road of life): establishing a defined working group through which a participatory action research process could evolve. Instead, the more dynamic thrust forward the research process had taken resulted in a series of "interviews" which could be considered more purely "data" collection exercises.

Nevertheless, considering how this initial whirlwind of encounters served to shape and guide this work, I started to realise that beyond ideas of more formalized working groups, a subtler exchange had taken place. Through the process of dialogue, shifts in my own thinking had occurred; I began to see the possibility of *Búmùntù* being used as a lens or a yardstick rather than a phenomenon to be studied; the previous emphasis on colonial violence had become more ambiguous, leaving more space for a broader acknowledgement of experiences of violence ; the articulation of *Búmùntù* had become less intent on a rediscovery and more welcoming of contemporary articulations in which diverse influences amalgamated. As a result, although this thesis still maintains its origins "from the desk of an "outsider" academic," it is through such a gradual process of "*le rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir*" (the encounter of giving and receiving) that this work has shifted from a soliloquy to a dialogue.

I will now turn to articulate the research processes undertaken during my second extensive field trip to Kamina, from which the majority of relational and dialogical encounters described in subsequent chapters are drawn. Here, I will use the metaphor of research as the search

for *mwendelo muyampe* (a good way of walking on the road of life) alongside the art of *débrouillardise* (resourcefulness) to describe the way in which I have come to understand my research process.

### ***MWENDELO MUYAMPE ALONGSIDE THE ART OF DÉBROUILLARDISE***

In July 2015, I returned to Kamina for my second field trip, this time accompanied by my five-year-old daughter intending to stay for five months. If, as earlier suggested, “I am, where I do and where I think,” there are a number of factors relating to the particular location I temporarily assumed during this sojourn in Kamina which are worth drawing attention to. Unlike the previous year, where I was very obviously a fly-in fly-out researcher hosted and accommodated by the United Methodist Community in their Guest House for one month, this time I instead took up an offer by Prof. Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha to reside in accommodation owned by the Catholic Bishop of Kamina and temporarily donated to him to support his work in Kamina. Whilst it was intended as a base for research and teaching, when not accommodating him on his twice-yearly visits to Kamina, the house accommodates members of his large extended family who care for the space. Unlike the Guest House which had a constantly shifting group of temporary guests who were all “professionals” engaged in various projects, this house in practice was a family environment with four generations of family living under the one roof and other extended family members regularly visiting. Our arrival created numerous shifts in the family dynamic, as they graciously attempted to accommodate both my professional identity as a researcher, providing a base for research, and our personal identities as a mother and child, offering a home and a family environment where we developed close personal relationships. In effect, echoing my earlier discussion of the borderlands space in Australia from which this research has originated, and the borderlands space of Kamina that I will come to introduce in more depth in subsequent chapters, this house too was a borderlands where hybrid identities were formed and where polarities were constantly challenged and this had implications for this research.

First, in contrast to my preliminary field trip, I was a more independent entity, my interactions with the local community being less mediated by one specific host organization.

This was challenging, but, it did mean that I could step back from the initial whirlwind of encounters and take time to recalibrate. The first month I spent slowly adjusting to the environment. I began working with the three students from the *Institut Supérieur de Pédagogie* (ISP) of Kamina who had accompanied me into the villages the previous year to more comprehensively translate and transcribe that series of dialogues. Fabrice Ilunga, from the United Methodist Community assisted me to organize a series of group dialogues with local academics, as well as a larger forum comprised of local academics and community leaders. The purpose of this was to present a summary of ideas from the preceding years research activities and to gather ideas for how to move forward. The earlier interaction with a group of young academics in which I was told that “science is science,” knowledge which is “demonstrable and justifiable and verifiable” arose from one of these group dialogues which specifically sought to explore what research methodologies based upon Luba epistemology might look like. Again, these dialogues failed to develop into the more concrete working group I had imagined might reflect *mwendelo muyampe* (a good way of walking on the road of life). They did, however, make me more conscious of the complexities (and even irony) of the process of decolonizing methodologies when the impetus for such a process does not emerge from the local level. Through these dialogues, I recognized the many barriers present to achieve more direct participation from others; my own lack of financing and resources; the intersecting interests of different individuals and organizations; my own alignment with one of these organizations; my own “professional” status and the apparent expectation at the local level that academic research is individually driven and for the purpose of knowledge and not action; and my own consciousness of the need to proceed given time limitations. Recognizing my own limitations and accepting the more subtle and gradual process of “*le rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir*” (the encounter of giving and receiving), I once again enacted the art of *débrouillardise* (resourcefulness).

Adapting again to a fluid and flexible research process, shaped by the relationships around, I took opportunities as they arose. Prof. Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha, Fabrice Ilunga, and Rev. Boniface Kabongo Ilunga pointed me in the direction of numerous individuals and groups. Having already developed relationships with numerous academics and community leaders, this became my starting point. Some of these relationships, for example with Professor Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie and Madame Véronique Kilumba, resulted in an ongoing series of

dialogues during my entire time in Kamina, whilst others were more time-limited one-off dialogues. Decisions were based on the interest of individuals, their time, willingness, and desire to engage in the dialogue. These individuals, in turn, introduced me to other individuals and groups. I once again visited the Notables from the Luba Royal Court in Kinkunki; was taken to the Luba Cultural Centre and met Tata Amedée who graciously sifted through pages with me in their small library. He, in turn, introduced me to his colleagues Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte and Pierre Mbanga. Pastor Maloba introduced me to three religious leaders, Papa Ndala, Papa Ngoy, and Papa Mbuya, from the « *Bulopwe Bwamulao Wa Bana Bansi* » (*The Missionary Church of Mage for the Reunification and the Kingdom of Promise of the Children of this Land*). We engaged in a series of dialogues together, however, they also invited me to their Sunday ceremony where Papa Mbuya gave an address specifically on the theme of *Búmùntù*. Madame Véronique Kilumba organized a meeting with her colleagues, Ruth Mwange and Jeannette Kabwika Mitonga, from *Synergie des Organisations, Initiatives et Associations Féminines (S.O.I.A.F.)* a local network of women's organizations. When some of my questions around culturally specific matters were difficult to answer she took me to visit a friend Nikolas Ngola Kalowa. Later she also facilitated a dialogue with a group of women who were engaged in her women's centre. In an attempt to hear more women's voices, Rev. Odette Makonga Kyakutala also took me to the women's group in her church. I engaged my own faith community in the dialogue. A chance encounter on the street with a *motard* (motorbike taxi) of Luba-Kasai origins resulted in a dialogue with the President of the Luba-Kasai community in Kamina. I was accompanied by two assistants from the local university, Billy Ngoy Mishindo and Boshwaa Nkulu Kilumba and two students Kasongo Nkulu Nancy and Ilunga Kazadi Choudelle travelling once again into the surrounding villages. Visits to two villages occurred specifically after an invitation resulting from our own personal relationships and we were welcomed and accommodated for a night. The fluidity and flexibility of this research process was also reflected in the support I received for translations to which I will return in the following discussion of "the "word" which brings into being." These are just some of the many individuals and groups with whom I was blessed to engage with. In the acknowledgements section of this thesis, I have more fully acknowledged their contribution with the term *Wafwako* or *Mwafwaiko* (pl) in Kiluba. In line with the meaning of the term previously offered, I once again acknowledge the contribution of these individuals and communities. Through dialogue, they have generously offered a part of themselves to this

work and thus, it has been through their offerings that the assemblage of relational and dialogical encounters described in the subsequent chapters has emerged.

Before venturing further, there was a second and more fundamental implication of our home environment in Kamina and the borderlands it represented as expressed in the earlier proverb stipulating that “true knowledge is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings.” Whilst in the following chapters I share “knowledge” co-constructed through an assemblage of relational and dialogical encounters conducted as part of a more formal conscious dialogue process, it is important to acknowledge that such dialogues occurred upon the backdrop of my own experience of *Búmùntù* and the struggle to live “in harmony with our fellow human beings.” I heard and understood accounts of *Búmùntù* and the hospitality it obliges one to offer to the “stranger” whilst experiencing and benefiting from it. When my daughter fell sick with malaria and was hospitalized, we were supported by a community that delivered us food, hot water for bathing, prayers and the medications and medical equipment the hospital needed for her treatment. I listened to individuals expressing the particular challenges of applying the proverb *kudja talala ikwabana biya* (to eat in peace, share well) in a contemporary context rife with socio-economic inequalities and widespread poverty. At the same time, I struggled to negotiate the desire to maintain a routine of three “appropriately” nutritious meals per day for my daughter, whilst also being overtly conscious that this was not the same standard, nor possible reality for the family within which we were living. I struggled with both the financial and ethical questions of “sharing well” within a large extended family group of which I’m positioned as a guest. I listened to individuals expressing the impact of the presence of the nearby Kamina Military Base on their experience of peace in Kamina. I experienced a sense of its impact, albeit in a mediated way, by the presence of a group of ex-child soldiers who after having been removed from the base by the Red Cross on account of their minor status, were living in a compound diagonally opposite ours as neighbours. We would pass them daily on our way to the local primary school which my daughter attended. I also experienced this sense when I received a phone call from that primary school asking me to pick the children up early as there had been rumours that a faction from the Kamina Military Base was making their way into the city to create trouble. I do not think that I would have had such embodied experiences if I had remained as an individual researcher, hosted and accommodated in a guest house where the interaction

with the local community was mediated through a host organization. I do not think that the deep physicality characterizing these experiences would have been as profound if I would have experienced them as an individual, rather than as a mother. Finally, I do not think that such embodied experiences exist separately to this thesis. Instead, this very personal struggle to find a *mwendelo muyampe* (a good way of walking on the road of life) in a local, translocal, and global context which often feels antithetic to such an ideal, thus necessitating the art of *débrouillardise* (resourcefulness), is very much enmeshed within the pages to come.

This leads me to the question of how I understood and interpreted these relational and dialogical encounters and then converted them into the written word you, the reader, will encounter in the pages to come, and in turn, how you might engage with them.

### *THE “WORD” WHICH BRINGS INTO BEING*

Many years ago, I stumbled across a book which transformed the way I understood language and the power of language. Drawing from creation narratives around the world, the author identified the resoundingly common theme of the power of the “Word” to bring into being. One can readily locate this in the Judeo-Christian creation account where; “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). However, the author went onto explore countless other creation myths from around the world which emphasized the creative potential of the “Word.” This theme is also found in Luba ontology. According to Nkulu N'Sengha (2002) language and being are ontologically inseparable, one having the capacity to have tremendous influence on the other. As a result, one must take great care with language, for just as one can produce life, truth, and goodness through speech, one can also produce death.<sup>68</sup> It is in light of such an understanding that I now explore the particular path I have taken in negotiating the various challenges and opportunities language has imposed both in the relational and dialogical encounters themselves, and then in re-presenting them here in the form of the written word.

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<sup>68</sup> In Kiluba, this distinction is made clear through the terms *Kunena*, referring to this meaningful speech that produces life, whilst its antithesis is *Kunenakanya* (Nkulu N'Sengha 2002).

Whilst previously having explored some of the practical and ethical implications of my “outsider” status, I return to this as I have not yet introduced myself as a linguistic “outsider.” And yet, as Chilisa (2012, p. 131) posits: “language expresses the patterns and structures of culture and consequently influences human thinking, manners, and judgment. Culture is lived, and language, through all its manifestations, projects that life, giving it form and texture.” Expressed another way: “...languages are not something human beings have but rather something of what human beings are...” (Mignolo 2003, p. 669). Given that this thesis seeks to better understand the concept of *Búmùntù* arising from a Luba ontological reality, it is naturally the Kiluba language which provides a better pathway towards that understanding. Unfortunately, my own positionality as a linguistic “outsider” has impeded this substantially, making it more viable to communicate in a shared language.

Initially, interviews occurred with individuals fluent and comfortable conversing in French, the “official” language of the DRC. Being less confident in my own fluency in French, I had initially sought the assistance of Fabrice Ilunga. Very quickly, however, it became clear that any embarrassment regarding my own grammatical failings, poor pronunciation, or clumsy stumbling in search of a word, petered into insignificance when weighed up with the value of the dialogues occurring in their relational fullness without the disruption of translations. The most important element was that we could understand and relate to each other comfortably. As all dialogues were recorded, I had access to the voice of my interlocutors speaking in a language in which they were fluent and comfortable with whilst I could listen back over the recording as many times as I needed. In light of the relevance of Kiluba as a pathway to better understand, various terms and proverbs in Kiluba were brought into the dialogue to better explicate the concepts being discussed; sometimes this would occur spontaneously, other times I would directly ask for it.

In contrast, for the dialogues occurring in Kiluba, although less of an impediment for individuals and communities to express Luba ontological reality, a much greater impediment for myself in establishing a relational and dialogical encounter existed. For this reason, I moderated my involvement substantially on many occasions, allowing colleagues to take a more pronounced role in facilitating the dialogues. Particularly in the context of group dialogues where multiple voices would weave in and out at once, I could not expect a

detailed translation without disrupting the dialogue. As a result, I was often given summary translations, whilst a colleague would continue facilitating the dialogue. I was engaged enough in the dialogue to respond with further questions as they arose, but a more substantial unpacking of the dialogue was left until later when we could dissect the recorded dialogue. Whilst in Kamina, transcripts were written up and translated, but because of financial and time limitations and the number of dialogues involved, these were not detailed but more summary translations, capturing the broad themes and then focusing in only if my colleagues felt there were particularly aspects worth capturing in more detail.

Once again, on return to Australia, my process in sorting through approximately eighty dialogues with well over 100 hours of recordings, as well as the many summary transcripts and translations of dialogues in Kiluba took on the same quality of the search for *mwendelo muyampe* (a good way of walking on the road of life) alongside the art of *débrouillardise* (resourcefulness). I made numerous attempts to get more comprehensive translations of the Kiluba interviews, but lack of financing and the distance to Kamina had an impact on the success of these attempts. As a starting point, I chose instead to focus on those dialogues in French, initially selecting those which were most pertinent to transcribe in full. Then, allowing the various concepts that arose to bring to mind other dialogues, I would turn my attention to these. I used the basic features of the qualitative data analysis software NVivo to organize sections of my dialogues into themes and draw relationships between them. I saw this as a process of allowing the various voices to meet each other and come into dialogue, but, in the process of trying to “know,” I found myself dissecting, cutting and pasting, explaining, making sense of, and manipulating. As I began to establish multiple chapter structures, all with a logical order, I found myself presenting a “knowledge” which was detached, dispersed and isolated. By thematically separating one part of a dialogue, from the context of the full dialogue, I was severing ideas from the very contexts that gave them life and meaning; dividing “fundamentally, the subject of the statement (the sense and reference of a statement) from its enunciation (the conditions on which one can make a statement at all)” (Phillips, 2006, p. 108). It was this recognition of the tendency to undo, to take apart and to divide, that eventually led me towards an alternative approach. Rather than trying to separate out in order to make sense of, I began to allow the many connectivities to come to the surface organically. I began to let the words flow, writing countless accounts in the form

of narratives in which were weaved both aspects of the dialogues, as well as my own embodied experience of these dialogues. Other narratives were more purely personal and related to my own experience of *Búmùntù* and the struggle to live “in harmony with our fellow human beings.” These narratives have been written and re-written, some dying out in the process, whilst others which previously lay hidden have been granted life. Gradually, and organically, they have found themselves coming together to form *Part Three: An Assemblage of Relational and Dialogical Encounters*. The notion of “assemblage,” here, referencing Deleuze and Guattari (1987), later extended by DeLanda (2006). Derived from the French term “*agencement*” meaning “a construction, an arrangement or a layout,” the notion of “assemblage” implies connection; that it is the arrangement of many heterogeneous elements that give meaning to concepts (Phillips, J 2006). By emphasizing fluidity, exchangeability and multiplicity of entities and their connectivities, the notion of “assemblage” offers a framework for entering into the irreducible social complexity which characterizes the contemporary world (DeLanda 2006). It echoes the potential earlier noted of border thinking in a borderlands and can be seen as particularly apt in the context of the relational reality embodied by *Búmùntù* and the earlier articulation of Luba ontology as a “world of forces held like a spider's web of which no single thread can be caused to vibrate without shaking the whole network” (Tempels 1959, p. 29). In order to guide you in your reading of these chapters which present the outcome of my fieldwork and the main contribution of this thesis, I would like to mark a point of transition.

### *A POINT OF TRANSITION*

In *Part Three*, you will be invited to “arrive” in Kamina and engage with the concept of *Búmùntù*. The point of transition, then, to which I refer, is not only a transition from the earlier chapters which established the purpose, rationale and method of this work to the empirical chapters which share the learning’s that have been gained from the field work; it also marks a more profound transition. Whilst in earlier chapters the emphasis was on the relevance of (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions, *Part Three* will commence with a genesis narrative. My purpose with this is to re-assert my earlier argument that this thesis engages with the “ontological” in the sense that it refers to “modes of being-in-the-world” (James 2006, p. 324). It intends to provoke the understanding that the task of

approaching humanness, violence and peace from an alternative angle requires no less than a bringing into question of the (dominant) fundamental conceptions of our world and our own “being-in-the-world.” By inviting you to “arrive” in Kamina, I am inviting you to arrive not only in a physical landscape, but also in an ontological landscape with its own long and rich history, even if, as described earlier, its contemporary form has existed alongside, in response to and in struggle against the modern/colonial world and the (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions to which earlier chapters referred.

Evidently, I am aware that such an invitation to “arrive” is not to an authentic arrival; rather, it is a heuristic device entirely mediated by my own engagement with the literature, my experiences in the field and my dialogues with individuals and communities in and around Kamina. In turn, it is mediated by the way I have chosen to represent this personal encounter in written form. Nevertheless, my choice to communicate this work as much as possible in a way that invites you in, grounds you in the terrain, asks you to encounter the people whose voices have contributed to this work and to engage with *Búmùntù* alongside “us” and “our dialogues” is my attempt to allow you, as reader, to experience this work physically and relationally as well as “rationally.” It is for this reason that the more didactic and concrete academic voice which, in the preceding chapters, directed you to the many facets of the central concern of this work, will stand back a little more in subsequent chapters. In line with the Luba proverb: *‘Iwa elwa kilubi’ (clear language is for the idiot)*, such a voice will not always intrude on the narrative. Instead at times, I offer a narrative in line with the language of proverbs which “makes the listeners think for himself, instead of offering him on a plate a naked truth,” (Nkulu N'Sengha 2002, p. 161) and in doing so, hopefully, stimulate the active listening, interpreting and critical thinking of you, the reader. My hope is that this will allow the many relational and dialogical encounters that are presented, and the relationship between them, to gradually unfold and reveal themselves, eventually gathering together to form the entire assemblage. It is, after all, this non-didactic, more subtle, gentle, approach of piecing together the many heterogenous elements, into a sometimes more and sometimes less cohesive whole, which more closely mirrors my own experience in conducting this research. I hope that the following chapters can engage you in a similar manner.

## PART THREE: AN ASSEMBLAGE OF RELATIONAL AND DIALOGICAL ENCOUNTERS

*Mba Mba Mba Mbambale... ..*

This is the sound reverberating from a bolide as it explodes in a shower of rainbow hue. Such a sound, I am told, expresses the shock of impact at the point of creation, where a meteorite, as progenitor of humankind, breaks open to form two intertwined serpents, one male, a rainbow coloured colubridae called *mwanzambala* and the other, female, a black mamba called *nkangi*. It is through their intertwining that they produce the shower of rainbow hue, *MWAMBA NKONGOLO*, a name echoing that of the first Luba King. This is just one variant of a Luba creation myth Clovis Mwamba shared with me during one of our many dialogues prior to my travel to Kamina (pers. conv., March, 2014).<sup>69</sup> In subsequent chapters, other variants will appear, suggesting a lack of consensus on a cosmological beginning. In light of this, my purpose in beginning with a bolide exploding is not to assert the veracity of one particular account over another; instead, as described earlier, this creation account is offered to provoke an understanding that to engage with *Búmùntù* is to engage with the ontological, with fundamental conceptions of our world and our own “being-in-the-world.” For me personally, this provocation was further extended by a cosmogram drawn on a piece of paper whilst the above creation narrative was being recounted, asking me to see the world anew. Mirroring my own experience, below I share this cosmogram prior to your “arriving” in Kamina and entering into the assemblage of relational and dialogical encounters. As well as helping to establish *Búmùntù* as the central theme, the cosmogram assists in establishing a more circular movement towards “knowing” presented in the pages to come, where various ideas are introduced and then repeatedly resurface. As I have drawn from elements of this cosmogram in the structuring of *Part Three*, I also offer it here to explicate the purpose of each of the four following chapters and the relationships that exist within and between.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> A written account of this genesis narrative can also be found in (Mwamba 2018)

<sup>70</sup> The cosmogram itself, and the particular genesis account from which it arose, did not directly appear during my time in Kamina. I have also been unable to find an equivalent cosmogram of the Luba-Katanga in the literature, although it does reflect literature on the Bakongo cosmogram (the Bakongo peoples are another major ethnic group located in DRC, as well as Rep. of Congo and Angola)(Ferguson 1999). Nevertheless, during my time in Kamina aspects of this cosmogram were regularly reflected, sometimes subtly and sometimes more overtly, throughout our dialogues. As a result, this cosmogram, offered a

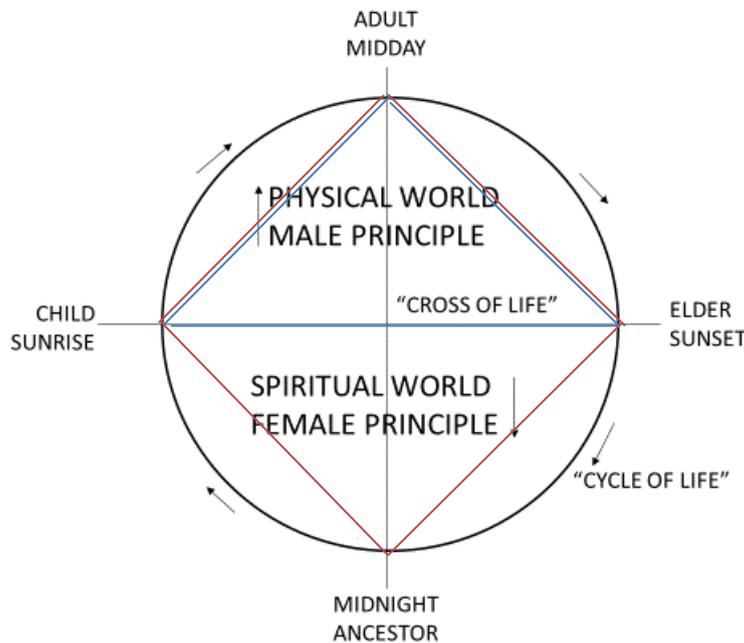


Figure 1: "Cycle of Life" Cosmogram. (Mwamba, pers. conv. March, 2014)

In the above cosmogram, a circle is drawn around an intersecting vertical and horizontal axis. Like the tracing of the sun from dawn to midday to dusk to midnight, this circular line traces a movement from the status of the child, to the adult, to the elder and to the ancestor. Fulfilling the cycle, the line between ancestor and child remains unbroken, representing the reality that the ancestor can be reborn by their name being carried into the next generation. This establishes the central principle of relationality associated with *Búmùntù* and widely acknowledged in scholarship on African religion and philosophy more broadly (Kagame 1976; Mbiti 1999; Mulago gwa Cikala 1973; Tempels 1959). This circle is titled the "cycle of life." According to Mwamba, it represents a social field in which the principle of *Búmùntù* is expected to reign as a central guiding force drawing the community inwards into harmony with one another. The term "*Muntu*" (human being) itself is offered as an indication of such a social field, the prefix (mu-) indicating 'inside of' and the root (ntu) indicating the "universal principle" (Mwamba 2018, p. 12). Accordingly, to be "authentically human" is to exist

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visual aid on which I could hang my developing understanding of the many facets, the complexities and contradictions of *Búmùntù* and the struggle for peace. It is my hope that it will operate in a like manner in your reading of the subsequent chapters.

relationally and harmoniously within.

In order to introduce the purpose of *Chapter Six: A Welcome to Kamina*, there are two aspects of the circle I draw attention to. Firstly, I suggest that the circle represents *Búmùntù* and the peace associated with it, as being located within a specific context, a given community or society, which operates “within” this “cycle of life.”<sup>71</sup> *Chapter Six*, thus begins, with a multi-levelled grounding in Kamina; you are invited to “arrive” in Kamina and visit various sites of significance. Drawing from an additional aspect of this cosmogram; the ongoing presence of ancestors (or the “living dead”<sup>72</sup>), you are invited to experience these sites of significance at multiple and intersecting time-place plateaus. In revealing glimpses of the histories that they carry, you are introduced to a contemporary landscape alive with the “past.” Whilst earlier chapters introduced the themes of *duress* and *endurance* in Congolese national history more broadly, this chapter locates these themes through the history of Kamina (and its present); shedding light on the immense (and often violent) transformations that have occurred across the Luba terrain over the last century or so. This is the terrain from which *Búmùntù* has arisen and evolved. This chapter thus sets the context from which we can subsequently engage in a dialogue on *Búmùntù*.

This is followed by *Chapter Seven: “To Be” is to Be in Harmony With ...* and *Chapter Eight: “To Become” is to Engage in the Struggle for Peace*, which both serve to explore the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*. Returning to the notion of a “cycle of life” as the social field within which *Búmùntù* is expected to reign, *Chapter Seven*, begins by exploring this social field and the concept of *Búmùntù*, this time from the perspective of individuals and communities living in Kamina and its environs. Particularly, it draws attention to the many affirmations throughout our dialogues of the earlier suggestion that peace (expressed more often as social harmony) is the defining characteristic of our humanness. Whilst such an affirmation is the primary focus of the chapter, woven throughout this chapter are also many intimations of a greater complexity. It is these complexities that lead directly to *Chapter*

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<sup>71</sup> However, the more universalistic expressions of *Búmùntù* discussed throughout the subsequent chapters can also contest this assertion.

<sup>72</sup> “Living dead” is a term famously coined by Mbiti (1999) which powerfully captures the way in which in many African cultures the “dead” are still very much considered an integral part of the living community.

*Eight.*

Although continuing the purpose of *Chapter Seven* to explore the place and meaning of peace, *Chapter Eight* takes a more critical approach. Drawing on the cosmogram, the chapter interrogates the idea that *Búmùntù* and the peace associated with it may pertain not to a limitless space, but instead to a terrain which has its peripheries. Importantly, whilst I explore “peripheries” in a more literal sense by entering more profoundly into another aspect of the cosmogram (the “cross of life”), I also apply it more metaphorically. In both cases, the acknowledgement of peripheries arises primarily through an engagement with groups in Kamina experiencing varying degrees of marginalization, exclusion and “Other-ing” today: women, ethnic “Others” and those associated with “traditional” religious beliefs and practices. It thus moves beyond the more abstract and even idealized assertions of the place and meaning of peace introduced in *Chapter Seven*, towards a more contested, fluid, and even unstable vision of peace — an acknowledgement, which I will argue, actually reveals the real potential of *Búmùntù* as a peace-enhancing and -maintaining concept.

Importantly, the notion of a contested, fluid, sometimes even unstable vision of peace is revealing of an underlying theme woven, sometimes overtly, sometimes more subtly, throughout both *Chapter Seven* and *Chapter Eight*. This theme can be considered as an extension of *Chapter Six’s* multi-levelled grounding in Kamina, where intimations of the immense (and often violent) transformations across the Luba terrain witnessed through such a grounding exercise, reverberate through the changing conceptions and applications of *Búmùntù* on a contemporary landscape. This will lead directly to *Chapter Nine: The Struggle for Peace Amongst Restless and Unatoned Bones*.

Drawing specifically on expressions of the peace associated with *Búmùntù*, *Chapter Nine* turns to explore the struggle for such a peace in the contemporary local landscape. In doing so, this chapter aims to draw together the implications of *Part One: Tracing the History of an Enduring Struggle*, and *Part Three: An Assemblage of Relational and Dialogical Encounters*. Moving beyond the evidence of *duress* and *endurance* in the *physical* landscape (Chapter Six), and their intimations in the *ontological* landscape (Chapters Seven and Eight), Chapter Nine enters more directly into a critical reflection of their relevance for the struggle for peace.

Whilst in this chapter, one finds a dominant narrative that *Búmùntù*, as both concept and praxis, is being “lost” and as a result, that peace is very far, there is also much evidence of the resistance, resilience, adaptation, and transformation of *Búmùntù* as part the enduring struggle for peace in an everchanging contemporary landscape.

This, in turn, will lead to the final concluding remarks in which I offer my reflections on *Búmùntù* and its relevance as a productive peace-enhancing and -maintaining concept in a contemporary and future local landscape. I particularly return to consider the contribution of the thesis in the context of the aforementioned “epic intellectual struggle” currently taking place regarding peacebuilding theory and practice, but also more broadly in the context of that broader epistemic shift or “decolonial turn” occurring across diverse fields and practice contexts. Finally, in light of the earlier proverb, *Kuboko kumo kubunga ke kololanga* (one single hand cannot apprehend many things), I remind you that this thesis is one moment in the development of an ever-evolving story and so I point to the many questions that are left open, calling forth the continuation of the dialogue. Having now established the flow and structure for the remaining chapters, we can now “arrive” in Kamina.

## CHAPTER SIX: A WELCOME TO KAMINA



Figure 2: Photos of Kamina Airport, 2015

*“Wako, Wako, Wako, Wako, Wako, Wako, Wako.....”*

It is a warm sound of welcome. The voices are somewhat muffled at first but increasingly clear as my ears adjust after a turbulent journey in the small 12 seater aeroplane which has carried us here. Having disembarked from the plane, allowing the humid air to envelop us, it is a feeling of calm that sweeps over. I am relieved to have escaped the dust and chaos of the urbanized streets of Lubumbashi. I take pleasure in the more natural environment, in the rather expansive field on which this runway resides, in the gathering of friendly faces standing in front of a small building offering the customs and immigration control. Venturing out of the airport vicinity, I take pleasure in the relative absence of cars, in the absence of traffic. The circulation on the streets, for the most part, is made up of pedestrians, those on bicycles and a large collection of *motards* offering a taxi service on their motor bikes. Street vendors with canisters of petrol are located at varying points along the route. Chickens and goats roam freely on the mainly unpaved roads. Nevertheless, despite a rural feel, Kamina is far from the “*village*” that friends in Lubumbashi have evoked through passing conversations. As noted earlier, Kamina is a city of approximately 240,000 (Ministère de l'Intérieur et Sécurité (Province du Katanga) 2014). Formerly a city in the Haut-Lomami district of the better-known province of Katanga, in 2015 as part of DRC’s decentralization process (or *decoupage*) it acquired the status of capital city to the newly established Haut-Lomami Province.

*Wako Wako Wako*... is the welcome greeting in Kiluba, the language of the Baluba of Katanga. As described in the opening section to the thesis, it is a greeting which — depending on the enthusiasm of the greeter — can extend exponentially. The expected responses of *Eyo Vidje* and *Eyo Mwa*, (earlier translated as “yes, my God” or “yes, divine one”) were offered as an introduction to the concept of *Búmùntù*. Whilst my earlier introduction reflected the predominant translation of *Wako* as a simple “*Bienvenue*” or “Welcome,” I extend on this now with an alternate translation offered to me by a local journalist, well-known in Kamina for his programs on Luba culture, and more specifically on Kiluba proverbs (dialogue #31, September, 2015). He suggests that *Wako* is a welcome carrying the statement: “you are now amongst us!” His reformulation of the statement as a question, “are you here amongst us?” makes tangible the expectation of a response. Although contested meanings of such responses will be introduced in the following chapters, there is a clear consensus on the basic sentiment of respect they express. In the articulation above, I am told that responding to the question “are you here amongst us?” indicates a willingness to enter into a relation of respect and harmony with the community that one is entering into.

It is with such a welcome (accompanied by the expectation of a response), then, that I open this chapter, inviting you to “arrive” in Kamina. The statement which expresses not only that “you are now here” but even more so, that “you are now amongst us” serves as a reminder that the task of grounding which this chapter seeks to accomplish not only seeks to ground you in a physical terrain, but also in a social field of relationships within a “cycle of life.” At the same time as visiting various sites of significance and revealing glimpses of the histories they carry, you will also be introduced to various individuals and communities (both living and “living dead”) together forming a part of contemporary Luba society. Given the focus established in *Part One*, which began with Stoler’s question (2016, p. 1) “How do colonial histories matter in the world today?” in this chapter I particularly emphasise the connectivities joining colonial pasts to postcolonial presents, “ineffably threaded through the fabric of contemporary life” (Stoler 2016, p. 5). Thus, themes introduced in earlier chapters, including the triple mission of “political repression,” “economic exploitation” and “cultural oppression” enacted by a “colonial trinity” of state, industry and church, will find themselves woven throughout this chapter, as will the themes of the ongoing quest of Congolese for

political and cultural freedom and economic prosperity in the face of that triple mission. This will set a foundation on which we can enter into dialogue on *Búmùntù* and the struggle for peace.

As an appropriate starting point, I follow a dusty road to *Kinkunki*, approximately five kilometres out of Kamina. Here, one finds the site of one of two continuing Royal Courts each tracing their lineage back to the once powerful Luba Empire, a vast dynastic state which emerged in the sixteenth century, its political system becoming highly influential throughout central Africa (Nooter Roberts & Roberts 1997; Reefe 1981). It is through the formation, development, and lingering demise (or enduring struggle) of this Empire that the culture of the Luba has been formed,<sup>73</sup> and it thus remains an important context upon which our dialogues on *Búmùntù* and the struggle for peace can be understood.

### *ON BLACKNESS AND ROYALTY*



*Figure 3: Photos of the Notables at the Luba Royal Court in Kinkunki, 2014*

*Here is Peace. Anyway, they call it the living room. If there are wars, if you find yourself here, you are at ease. You can rest here.*

*(Notables of the Luba Royal Court, dialogue #50, October, 2015)*

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<sup>73</sup> Whilst the term “Luba” is often used as an ethnonym to describe a specific “ethnic” group, it is widely recognized that the term is more complex and ambiguous. In fact, the term “Luba” refers to numerous populations and chiefdoms which all came to be associated with this large dynastic state from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Whilst the Luba identity has changed over time and many different “sub-groups” have been identified, one can identify three major divisions - Luba-Katanga, Luba-Kasai and Luba Hemba. For accounts of the complexities of the Luba ethnic identity see de Maret & Livingston Smith (2016) and Petit (1996).

Arriving through the large gates at the entrance of *Kinkunki*, a statue elevated on a large cement block greets us. This memorial pays tribute to *Mbidi Kiluwe*, the most revered ancestor of the Luba, whose story is told in the popular Luba creation myth. Unlike the opening creation story which began with the sound of a bolide, this genesis myth narrates the political formation of the Luba (Reefe 1981). According to this popular myth, *Nkongolo Mwamba*, earlier introduced as a rainbow of intertwined serpents, is remembered as the first King of the Luba. Characterized by redness and cruelty, he is remembered as a conquering self-made leader, associated with the savage and uncouth manners of the past. The arrival of a hunter from the east, *Mbidi Kiluwe*, foreshadows the end of *Nkongolo Mwamba's* tyrannical reign. In contrast to redness and cruelty, *Mbidi Kiluwe* represents a more refined leadership, characterized by blackness and royalty. Through his union with one of *Nkongolo's* sisters, a son, *Kalala Ilunga*, is born. It is *Kalala Ilunga* who displaces his uncle's reign thus implementing a new political system of the '*Bulopwe*,' the sacral model of Kingship introduced by his father.

The above assertion of a place of peace was made in *Kinkunki* and alludes to the belief in the continuation of the sacral model of Kingship into the contemporary moment. It arose in a dialogue with a group of notables in a refined living room in the principal residence of a large compound in *Kinkunki*. Although the current *Grand Chef* was away on business, a framed black and white photograph of his father, the late *Grand Chef*, hung on the wall and served to situate us within the *Chefferie of Kasongo Wa Nyembo*. Still today, these leaders trace their ancestry back to the dynasty of sacred Kings beginning with *Mbidi Kiluwe* and *Kalala Ilunga*. The assertion: "Here is Peace" also derives from this royal line, as it was voiced by the brother of the current *Grand Chef*, currently acting in his absence. Emphasizing this perspective further, he offered the following: "That is why there has never been any plunder, not even of the Mai Mai here, because everyone who comes here finds himself at home." In the continuing dialogue with the Notables in *Kinkunki*, multiple layers to the assertion of a place of peace emerged.<sup>74</sup> Ultimately, the primary assertion related to the unifying position

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<sup>74</sup> The original assertion of such a "place of peace" arose during our dialogue when the brother of the current Grand Chef drew a distinction between the apparently violent cultural practices of some Luba from neighbouring regions compared to the apparently more "authentic" and peaceful cultural practices within the *Chefferie Kasongo Wa Nyembo*, as the "source" of the Luba. Expanding upon this, the Notables then went on to describe a more metaphysical realm of protection which surrounds the *Chefferie Kasongo*

of the *Mulopwe* (King). Responsible for the distribution of powers to lower chiefs, the *Mulopwe* (King) is said to hold the ultimate authority over them and is thus considered as a “father to all.” According to the Notables, still today in *Kinkunki*, the current *Grand Chef Kasongo Wa Nyembo* continues to operate in this role, distributing power to the lower chiefs in the surrounding territories. Whilst various investiture rites (some involving considerable violence) have been prohibited by the State, many still persist. According to these Notables, a new chief will be covered with *Mpemba* (a white powder of benediction) to mark his entrance into this divine role. In being so covered, the chief accepts a plethora of conditions which dictate the behaviour appropriate of royalty, in turn establishing the conditions which give the power to preserve peace.

The metaphors of redness and cruelty and blackness and royalty in the above popular genesis myth, as well as the continued belief in a sacral model of Kingship preserving the peace (whilst also drawing upon a degree of violence), is particularly relevant given the central themes of humanness, violence and peace. From the location of *Kinkunki*, then, one can gather many allusions to the struggle for peace as a central feature of Luba history and the way in which the rich history of this Empire and its contemporary expression in *Kinkunki* today is deeply relevant to our exploration of *Búmùntù* and the contemporary struggle for peace.

The Luba have been known to be a warrior peoples whose vast empire expanded through often violent conquests of neighbouring states. At the same time, it has been argued that the large-scale state that emerged could not have been sustained by conquest and violence alone. According to Reeve (1981, p. 5), the development of “ideologies, insignia and institutions” exported to clients along the periphery played a large role in enabling the *Bulopwe* (King) to claim a degree of loyalty from them. This included the exportation of the above Luba genesis myth of sacred Kingship as a model of civilised rule, as well as a rich material culture of “coiffures, cicatarisation, emblems and regalia,” thus resulting in the

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*Wa Nyembo*, and more specifically *Kinkunki*. This, it was said, has been invoked through various rituals conducted by the *Grand Chef* in conjunction with local diviners in order to prevent any violence from entering this region. The emphasis was on the power possessed by the *Grand Chef Kasongo Wa Nyembo* in his role as the “father to all.”

“Luba-isation”<sup>75</sup> of groups residing on the peripheries of the heartlands (Maxwell 2016). Precolonial Luba identity was thus characterized by a plurality and fluidity, and groups that self-identified as Luba could also self-identify under varying other groupings such as regional trading networks, or more localized identities of households, clans or religious associations (Maxwell 2016). Accordingly, a *Pax Luba* is said to have emerged from before the 18<sup>th</sup> century within the Luba heartlands, eventually extending outwards and maintaining a relative peace and prosperity amongst peoples of various languages until its collapse in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>76</sup> The suggested end of the *Pax Luba* is consistent with an understanding of the demise of the Luba Empire as a large scale dynastic state. By the late nineteenth century, the interior location of the Luba Empire was no longer a protective factor against the intrusive forces of the developing regional imperial economy. A combination of internal weaknesses and external aggressions, such as the Arab-Swahili and Ovimbundu slave and ivory trades as well as the establishment of the nearby conquest state of the Yeke Kingdom<sup>77</sup> also strengthened by the copper, ivory and slave trades soon led to the disintegration and collapse of the Luba Empire as a large-scale state. According to Reefer (1981, p. 159), by the time the first Belgian-led expeditions arrived among the Luba in 1891, the Empire had already been largely dismembered.

In *Chapter One*, I described the formation of King Leopold II’s Congo Free State in 1885. Returning to locate the specific history of the Luba within this broader national history, it is worth noting that it was nine years later in 1894 that Katanga was officially incorporated into the territory of the Congo Free State. Following the first Belgian-led expedition of 1891, the Belgian geologist René Jules Cornet, as part of the fourth and most important mission of the Compagnie du Katanga,<sup>78</sup> exposed the immense mineral wealth of the region of Katanga. As

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<sup>75</sup> The term *Balubaïsés* or “Luba-ised” was first used in the influential work by Verhulpen (1936) titled *Baluba et Balubaïsés du Katanga*. According to Nooter Roberts and Roberts (2011-2012) it is suggestive of a cultural transformation occurring as a dynamic process whereby attributes of Luba culture were “emulated, adopted and adapted” by neighbouring ethnic groups.

<sup>76</sup> The term “relative” is the operative word here. Of this *Pax Luba*, Reefer (1981, p. 102) writes: “this was a peace relative to its time and place: conflict, intrigue, and political competition occurred, but centrifugal tendencies were reduced. Succession struggles might go on within subordinate polities, but increasingly they led to the reintegration of client lineages into the Empire rather than to secession from it.” See also Nkulu N’Sengha (2002) and Nooter Roberts & Roberts (1997).

<sup>77</sup> The Yeke Kingdom (also known as the Garengaze Kingdom) was established by Msiri in South Central Katanga.

<sup>78</sup> The Compagnie du Katanga was a concession company of the Congo Free State created on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1891 to ensure the effective occupation of Katanga.

Nzongola-Ntalaja (2007) writes, it was this revelation which earned for the nation its international notoriety as a “veritable geological scandal,”<sup>79</sup> and in turn contributed to the bitter struggle, sometimes referred to as the “Scramble for Katanga,” eventuating between the two imperial powers of Belgium and Britain (Konczacki 1985). This struggle, alongside the powerful local resistance from Msiri’s Yeke Kingdom, deferred Katanga’s incorporation into the Congo Free State.

Nevertheless, once incorporated, the Katanga region too became part of that period of Congolese history whose “atrocities of epic proportions” (Likaka 2009) were earlier described. A harrowing account of the initial introduction of the Luba into the Congo Free State follows:

A number of women were caught in the fields and roped together, and the village was plundered and burnt to the ground. Kayombo was the next large Luba chief dealt with. Having taken refuge among reeds, in a marsh, he was caught and hung up by the feet to a palm tree; then a fire was kindled underneath, over which he was slowly roasted to death.....After that, Katoro, another very large Chief, living near the apex of Western and Eastern Lualaba, was attacked. The crowds were fired into promiscuously, and fifteen were killed, including four women and a baby on its mother’s breast. The heads were cut off and brought to the officer in charge, who then sent the men to cut off the hands also, and these were pierced, strung, and dried over the camp fire ..... These towns were prosperous, and the centre of a healthy native trade in grass-cloths, iron, beads, and palm oil. This was their introduction to the yellow star flag and the State.....(Morel 1904).<sup>80</sup>

As described in the earlier broader historical overview, the mass atrocities of the Congo Free State period are best understood in the context of the social and political dynamics of the

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<sup>79</sup> According to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2007) this term “veritable geological scandal” was used by Belgian geologist René Jules Cornet in his report of his prospecting mission of Katanga for the Compagnie du Katanga in 1892.

<sup>80</sup> This is an account found in a letter by the Scottish missionary Dugald Campbell recorded in Morel’s *King Leopold’s Rule in Africa* published in 1904.

period, including the disintegration of large political units like the Luba Empire. With the Luba Empire already dismembered, the Luba resistance against the colonial conquest and its ability to protect communities from such violence was greatly weakened. However, the remnants of this ancient empire put up some of the strongest and sustained resistance to colonial rule throughout Congo (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). The Luba-Katanga kingdoms, as a result of a succession struggle (1870 to 1891) split into the *Chefferie of Kabongo* and the *Chefferie of Kasongo Wa Nyembo* (Reefe 1981) staged a powerful resistance against the colonial state between 1907 and 1917. Later in this chapter, I will return to elaborate further on the Luba-Katanga Kingdoms and their evolving relationship with the colonial state. The very building from which our dialogue took place and the location of Kinkunki itself, both offer testimony to the fact that there have been periods of resistance as well as receptivity of and adaptation to the colonial state. Similarly, as we continue to ground ourselves in Kamina, other exogenous influences will be revealed which have further shaped the evolution of this ancient political institution and its contemporary expression in Kinkunki today.

For now, however, I return to the statue of *Mbidi Kiluwe* and the initial assertion of a place of peace which began this opening into Luba history and which alluded to a belief in the continuation of the *Bulopwe*, sacral model of Kingship established by the early Luba ancestors, into the contemporary moment. Importantly, this is just one perspective from inside Kinkunki; back in the city of Kamina, in the house of *Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse*, an Elder and local intellectual of Belgian and Luba lineage, I encountered an alternate evaluation:

The royal power or the *Bulopwe* came from God...Presently we live in a time of change and of the end of the *Bulopwe*. All the *Balopwe* (Kings) have resigned (no one lives in his territory). They have rejected the *bijila* (law) or they no longer follow the laws and customary practices which were imposed by God. In other terms: they have rejected the customary rights of *BÚMUNTÙ BWA BALOPWE*. Politically the “Grand Chiefs” exist still (the majority are deputies or senators, honorary titles that put them above the administrators of the territory.) Customarily they still have this label of power, until...the “D” day of God. (Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse, dialogue #51, October, 2015)

From this perspective, the sacred authority attributed to the *Balopwe*, once seen to be originating directly from a Supreme God, has been largely lost. Whilst recognized within the political context of the modern state, this appears to be more of a token tribute whilst their “true” authority has been dramatically reduced. In *Chapter Nine*, I return to explore this further and its implications on the struggle for peace. For now, however, it is worth noting the designation of the end of the *Bulopwe* in the present moment, in light of the earlier articulation of the demise of the Luba Empire in the 1870s and 1880s, and then again the yielding of the remnants of the Empire to the colonial state in 1917. Evidently, there have been multiple points within Luba history where a “death” of this ancient political institution has been declared, despite its obvious perseverance notwithstanding the many transformations. This is why I asserted the relevance of the Luba Empire for our subsequent dialogues on *Búmùntù* and referred to the formation, development and lingering demise (or enduring struggle) of this Empire as the context upon which Luba culture has been formed. Indeed, whichever position one takes regarding the extent to which the *Bulopwe* persists or has perished, the rich history of the Luba Empire and its contemporary expression in *Kinkunki* is still deeply relevant today. As just one indication of this: here, during my first field trip, standing next to the statue of the famous personage of *Mbidi Kiluwe* in *Kinkunki*, I was officially welcomed to Kamina. With various words uttered and *Mpemba* (a white powder of benediction) rubbed in my hands, I was offered protection on Luba lands. It was the ancestors who, I was told, would offer that protection. I carried a small piece of this *Mpemba* in a leather pouch throughout the rest of my time in Kamina; its powdery residue returned with me the following year for my second field trip and again remained in that same leather pouch until my return home.

### *WHERE THREE LINES MEET*



Figure 4: Photos of Kamina Railway Station, 2015

Kamina railway station can be a desolate place; in contrast to the aliveness of the nearby market of “*Quartier 82*”, the sounds of laughter, bartering and the competing rhythms of blaring sound systems, it is comparatively quiet and still. Like our arrival in Kinkunki, it is a memorial which greets us, this time, invoking reflection on a less ancient past. Here, positioned at the entrance to the station, under the sign bearing our location and elevated on a stand, is the front part of an old steam locomotive. Its shiny black body with red and yellow trimmings demonstrates that it has received a level of attention and care which has not been granted to its surrounds. It stands out from the small collection of rusted carriages abandoned in the station yard. Two similarly rusted water towers blend in with the ochre hues of the train carcasses. A sign on a nearby wall indicates that there was once an eatery, however, closed doors and scratched off paint suggest that gone are the days that it was in operation. In these moments of stillness and quiet, it is hard to imagine this space as the marker of Kamina’s status as a *carrefour* (a *crossroads*) where three train lines meet, joining the north, west and south east of the country. And yet, the three plaques which present the memorial of an old steam locomotive, invite us to reflect on the more modern past of this “*carrefour*.”

It is the smallest of the plaques, its colours blending with the black, red and yellow of the locomotive (the colours of the Belgian flag) which appear to be the original. It reads:

IN MEMORY OF THE STEAM TRAIN 1906-1972<sup>81</sup>

Indeed, 1906 marks the constitution of the *Compagnie du chemin de fer du bas-Congo au Katanga (BCK)* a Belgian railway company established with the purpose of building and operating a railway enabling the connection between the mineral rich Katanga region and the international ports of Matadi in Congo, Lobito and Benguela in Angola and Beira in Mozambique.<sup>82</sup> The BCK railroad is thus known as a means by which a vast array of minerals including copper, cobalt, uranium, tin, silver, platinum, lead, palladium, zinc and gold flowed out of the country. It is just one amongst a collection of major corporations established just

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<sup>81</sup> Translated from the original: “En Souvenir de la Vapeur 1906-1972)

<sup>82</sup> The emphasis on international ports is consistent with the development of roads and railways in the Congo more broadly, in that the intention was largely for export purposes, rather than as a means of movement within the country (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007).

prior to the transition from King Leopold II's Congo Free State to the Belgian Congo.<sup>83</sup> By far the most significant of these, established in the same year as the BCK, was the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga (U.M.H.K.)*, a giant Belgian mining conglomerate which, according to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2007, p. 29), became "the single most important business enterprise in the Congo's economy" and, in turn, became one of the "free world's" first producers of cobalt (some 60% of the world's cobalt) and uranium, and its third producer of copper (Gibbs 1993; Lemarchand, R 1962). It also dominated Congo's production of tin, silver, platinum, lead, palladium and zinc. According to Lemarchand (1962), by 1955, just five years before independence, the company recorded gross profits of 125 million dollars, of which 54 million were distributed in dividends, the value of Katanga's mineral exports estimated at 80% of Congo's total mineral exports.

Whilst established under the leadership of the *Société Générale de Belgique*, as a "modern capitalist corporation" it was very much transnational in nature and, given the aforementioned "Scramble for Katanga," represented somewhat of a compromise between King Leopold II and Robert Williams, the British owner of Tanganyika Concessions Limited (TCL) (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007).<sup>84</sup> As an indication of its transnational nature, it was the Shinkolobwe mine of the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga (U.M.H.K.)* that supplied the uranium with which the Americans produced the first atomic weapons dropped in 1945 on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Williams 2016). From early 1943, it was via the railway route through Kamina that shipments of uranium were made (Williams 2016).<sup>85</sup> Later, our visit to another site in Kamina will expand upon this history revealing the way in which these transnational corporate interests resulted in the entanglement of this region in the complexities of Cold War politics. For now, however, I focus on the way in which the twin companies of *Union Minière du Haut Katanga (U.M.H.K.)*, and the *Compagnie du chemin de*

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<sup>83</sup> This included: *Compagnie des Chemins de fer du Congo supérieur aux Grands Lacs (CFL)*, and the *Société internationale forestière et minière (Forminière)* amongst others (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007).

<sup>84</sup> When UMHK was first established 14.5% of the shares were held by Tanganyika Concessions Limited (TCL), 25.1% by the *Comité Spécial du Katanga (CSK)* a joint venture of the Congo Free State and the *Compagnie du Congo pour le commerce et l'industrie (CCCI)*, 4.5% by the *Société Générale de Belgique (SGB)*, and over 50% for other Belgian and foreign financial groups. Several which represented King Leopold's interests (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007).

<sup>85</sup> This was a complicated route by train (through Kamina) to Port-Francqui, by barge on the Kasai River until it joined the Congo River to arrive at Léopoldville and then by rail to the international port at Matadi. Earlier shipments took a different route via rail to Lobito in Angola (Williams 2016, p. xxii).

*fer du bas-Congo au Katanga (BCK)* had a profound impact on the region, economically, politically, and socially. Their presence dramatically altered the landscape, contributing to the rapid development of commercial and administrative towns along the line, Kamina being one such town.

Earlier, from the location of Kinkunki, we were able to gather many allusions to the struggle for peace as a central feature of a more ancient history. Now, the Kamina railway station provides a particularly pertinent location from which we can get a sense of the struggle for peace in Kamina's more modern history. More specifically, we can also get a sense of the way Kamina's introduction into a modern capitalist global economy continues to be deeply relevant to our exploration of *Búmùntù* and the contemporary struggle for peace. There are three salient features of this period of rapid transformation first offered by Lemarchand (1962) I draw attention to, as their relevance will reappear in subsequent chapters.

Firstly, it is important to note that the three major mining centres of the former Elizabethville (modern Lubumbashi), Jadotville (modern Likasi) and Kolwezi, were all located in the southern part of the province. The rapid industrial development that occurred during this period was not evenly distributed throughout Katanga. Instead, a heavy concentration of this development remained in the south (including substantial social overhead capital, such as commercial centres, communication facilities, schools, hospitals). This meant that the northern region, the homelands of the Luba of Katanga, were somewhat removed (and likely experienced as both exclusion and insulation) from this rapid industrialization and urbanization,<sup>86</sup> Kamina itself positioned within the southern frontiers of these homelands. As just one indication of the way in which the differential experience of development (and exploitation) amongst the Luba-Katanga may have impacted on contemporary Luba society, one can turn to reflect upon the contemporary location of the two branches of the Luba-Katanga kingdoms, the *Chefferie of Kabongo* and the *Chefferie of Kasongo Wa Nyembo*. Although, as noted earlier, their separation dates back to a succession struggle from 1870 to 1891, the current location of the Royal Court of the *Chefferie Kasongo Wa Nyembo* in fact

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<sup>86</sup> Lemarchand (1962) emphasizes the insulation of the Baluba from the unsettling influences of the rapid industrial development; however, his further articulation of the profound social and political tensions between Northern and Southern regions of Katanga leads me to emphasize both exclusion and insulation.

dates back to 1948. It was at this time that the Belgian colonial government constructed a house for the *Grand Chef Kasongo Wa Nyembo* in *Kinkunki*. Unlike the original location at Samba, approximately 100km further north, this more southern location was positioned along the trade route between Bukama and Kabinda, allowing the colonial state to maintain a continuous surveillance on the King's activities.<sup>87</sup> Importantly, the other branch of the Luba royal dynasty, the *Chefferie of Kabongo* remained further north in the town of *Kabongo* in the Luba heartland, thus, aggravating an existing division within the Luba-Katanga, between the more excluded and insulated north and the more industrialized south.

The second salient feature of this period of rapid transformation is a profound change in the cultural composition of the Katanga province. With the offer of lucrative economic opportunities, the Katanga province attracted a large influx of European settlers. By 1958, just two years before Congo's Independence, 31,847 Europeans lived in Katanga, by far the highest European population in the country (Lemarchand, R 1962). In addition, to fill the sudden demands of rapid industrial development many Congolese from outside of Katanga were recruited to participate in the labour force. Most notably, a large population from the Kasai Province settled in Katanga and took full advantage of the economic opportunities available. The vast majority of these were Luba-Kasai, who although part of that macro-ethnicity or "super-tribe"<sup>88</sup> of Luba peoples, were nevertheless still a distinct cultural group with different relations to the historic Luba polity and speaking a different language (Tshiluba) (Maxwell 2016).<sup>89</sup> Exaggerating this difference was their higher standing amongst the Europeans. With the colonial imposition having occurred earlier in the Kasai Province and acculturation to European cultures being more deeply-rooted, the Kasaiens were given preferential treatment. They soon established somewhat of a monopoly on the most skilled positions in the mining and railway industries (such as welders, train conductors, mechanics), as well as the most senior white-collar positions allowed to be held by Congolese (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). This in turn led to them becoming the object of significant social and political

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<sup>87</sup> This was communicated to me by the Notables in Kinkunki (dialogue #50, October, 2015). According to them, the reason for this need for continuous surveillance was due to the colonial governments concern over the high incidences of human sacrifice that apparently accompanied this powerful King.

<sup>88</sup> The term "super tribe" was used by Young (1965) who described the construction of this broad Luba identity during the Colonial period.

<sup>89</sup> See also Jewsiewicki (1989) whose chapter on ethnic construction demonstrates the creation of the Luba-Kasai identity evolving out of the colonial political economy.

tension in this region.

Finally, the third salient feature that I draw attention to and which further increased the divisions identified above, was a more general economic grievance, a growing frustration that Katanga was “the cow that the other territories never tired of milking,” remembering that, by 1955 the value of Katanga’s mineral exports was estimated at 80% of Congo’s total mineral exports.<sup>90</sup>

Let us return to our location at the *Gare S.N.C.C. Kamina* standing before the memorial of an old steam locomotive and maintaining a focus on the smallest of the plaques reading: EN SOUVENIR DE LA VAPEUR 1906-1972 (IN MEMORY OF THE STEAM TRAIN 1906-1972). It is worth noting that 1972 marks the end of the time period memorialized.<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, the black, red and yellow of the Belgian flag is maintained despite the transition to independence in 1960 resulting in the transition of the BCK from a Belgian to a Congolese company,<sup>92</sup> thus, making tangible those many connectivities joining colonial pasts to postcolonial presents. The relevance of these connectivities will continue to emerge in the pages to come, in turn, allowing us to return to Kamina Railway Station equipped with a greater understanding of the terrain, to interrogate the remaining two plaques of this memorial of an old steam locomotive. For now, we move to a freshly-painted mural within walking distance from the station.

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<sup>90</sup> Lemarchand (1962) borrows the metaphor of the “cow that the territories never tired of milking” from the perception of the Ivory Coast in relation to other states in French West Africa.

<sup>91</sup> One might assume that this marks the final years of the *BCK*, subsumed into the *Compagnie de chemin de fer de Kinshasa-dilolo-Lubumbashi (KDL)* in 1970, and then subsequently integrated into the *Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Zairois* in 1974.

<sup>92</sup> The mark of the 70s as an endpoint is then perhaps more indicative of the political alignments of the then President Mobutu Sese Seko (1965-1997) whose relationship with the former colonisers was wavering. Initially, boosted into power through a *coup d'état* against the democratically elected independence leader Patrice Lumumba aided and abetted by Belgium and the US amongst others. It was in the early 1970s, however, as part of his “Authenticité” or “Zairianisation” campaign that Mobutu sought to rid the country of the lingering traces of colonialism, in 1971, changing the country’s name to the Republic of Zaire.

## *EDUCATION IS LIBERATION*



*Figure 5: Photo of GAD School, Kamina, 2015*

Bright and colourful images of smiling children and beautiful natural landscapes can be seen on a freshly painted mural covering the walls surrounding a local primary school. During my time in Kamina, this local primary school offered my five-year-old daughter her first experience of primary education. During my daily drop-offs and pickups, then, I was able to witness this rare presentation of local art gradually taking form. I regularly stopped to converse with the artist enquiring about his intentions for the vague outlines which appeared on otherwise blank panels. The culmination of one panel, whose more sombre subject matter stood in stark contrast to the otherwise joyful display, particularly intrigued me. Near naked black men are positioned in single file and draped in chains and expressions of agony and appearing as the menacing presence alongside was a group of white men clothed in refined colonial uniforms and carrying arms. The words “Education is Liberation” finally appeared scrawled across this panel offering a sense of its significance.

In the context of the DRC, it is important to acknowledge two forms of education that have and continue to function and evolve simultaneously: customary education and the school system.<sup>93</sup> Given the context of the words scrawled across the local primary school, the

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<sup>93</sup> Munyanji (2002) refers to this as “ancestral traditional education” and describes its ongoing influence alongside the school system in the Kasai regions.

education being referred to here is that of the school system.

The history of the formal school system in the Belgian Congo is tied to the history of the missions project and the Church. Unlike other early twentieth-century colonial powers in Africa who took a direct responsibility for the education of the indigenous population, the Belgian Congo took a more “*laissez-faire*” approach with responsibility for education handed over to missionaries, primarily Catholic. This began on a small scale during the Congo Free State period, however in 1906 the predominantly informal agreements were concretized in the form of a Concordat with the Vatican. The 1906 Concordat accorded administrative protection, grants of land and subsidies to national missions so that they could carry on their educational, scientific, and religious activities (Boyle 1995). Protestants, although excluded from these “national missions” also created *écoles libres* (private schools) aimed at evangelisation and education. According to Lemarchand, R. (1964), between 1891 and 1931, numbers of Catholic missionaries increased from 11 to 1870, whilst those of Protestant missionaries increased from 79 to 740. By the early 1920s, colonial administration reports claimed that over 100,000 children were attending either Protestant or Catholic schools (DeJaeger cited in Boyle 1995). Interestingly, while educational reforms during the 1920s resulted in administrators collaborating with the missions to standardise a programme of education, there was a notable absence of any “*élite track*” within such a programme. Instead, education was “adapted to the rural milieu,” stressed agricultural practices and a repeated preference for moral rather than academic instruction, including a program for girls (Boyle 1995).

This was the context in which Tempels’ work, explored in Chapter Two, arose. Indeed, the preference for moral rather than academic instruction described above reflected a common concern — also noticed in Tempels’ writing — that the *deracinés* (uprooted) residing in urban and mining centres, described as “materialists who have lost their foothold in ancestral tradition,” would become violent and lead to insurrection (Boyle 1995). With such an emphasis on moral instruction, however, missionary activities and the formal schooling system had a profound influence on society and culture at large. Numerous authors, for example, have described its impact in radically altering local gender relations (Freedman 2016; Mertens 2017; Mianda 2002; Yates 1989). Similarly, in the context of Katanga more

specifically, the educational, scientific, and religious pursuits of missionaries also had a profound influence on the shaping of a more fixed Luba-Katanga ethnic identity (Maxwell 2016). Particularly pertinent to our exploration in subsequent chapters, is the role of missionaries in the Christianisation of Luba cosmology, and the “generation of a body of myth, folklore, proverb and history,” through which choices were made regarding those aspects of Luba culture which should be preserved and supplemented and those which should be eradicated. For example, whilst missionaries sought to put an end to practices such as divination, sorcery and ancestor worship, they also created nostalgia for the vanishing customs and traditions of a past essentialised “Lubaland,” promoting Christianity as the natural culmination of Luba culture and tradition (Maxwell 2016).

Importantly, certain colonial schools did train a small elite who became known as the *évolués*; literally meaning evolved, this term was used to refer to a “native” who had, through European education, accepted European values and patterns of behaviour. These “*évolués*” spoke French, followed European laws (rather than customary laws), had a fixed income, held white-collar jobs, were monogamous and lived in urban areas. In July 1948, after demands from the *évolués* themselves, their status was officiated through the *carte de mérite civique* (card of civic merit) which recognised their advanced “state of civilization” (Lemarchand, R. 1964, p. 42). This involved an application process where the *évolué* would have to prove that he was free of “uncivilized” practices and that he was “penetrated with European civilization and conforms to it” (Young 1965, p. 85). In 1952, the ‘immatriculation’ legislation enhanced this status further according the *évolués* an ‘almost’ European status. They were, however, still subject to certain laws and regulations applying only to Africans and most importantly, their salaries were not increased (Bouwer 2010, p. 15). Like elsewhere in colonial Africa, once it was clear that equality and justice would not be achieved within the colonial structure, the *évolués* soon chose instead to join the mass-based anticolonial resistance and became leaders in the struggle for independence. It is that form of liberation the words “education is liberation” scrawled across the local primary school seem to be pointing towards.

The above exploration of Kamina has thus far emphasized the colonial past. More specifically, the three sites chosen have each reflected the influence of the “colonial trinity”

of state, industry and church in Kamina. Now, I would like to move towards another site marking the significance of this city in Congo's violent transition to independence, at the same time, alluding to the ongoing impact of this "colonial trinity" within the post-colonial. In order to arrive, it is necessary to follow another dusty road this time approximately 20km out of Kamina.

### *A SITE OF COLD WAR CONTEST*

This is the Kamina Military Base, a large military land- and air-base, today operating as a site of the "brassage" process, which is part of the *Programme National de Désarmement, de Démobilisation et de Réinsertion* (PNDDR — *National Program of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration*) following the two Congo Wars, whereby ex-combatants are demobilized from the multitude of armed groups across the nation and are reintegrated into the national army. Clearly, the contemporary purpose and function of this site is relevant for our exploration of the contemporary struggle for peace, however, it is its historical purpose and function to which I initially turn.

The Kamina Military Base was first established by the Belgian Armed Forces in the late 1940s, its timing coinciding with the earlier described relocation of *King Kasongo Wa Nyembo* from the more remote *Samba* to the more accessible *Kinkunki*, thus creating a convenient proximity between the military base, *Kinkunki*, and the Kamina Railway Station.

Nevertheless, according to Gijs (2016), the motivation for the establishment of the military base was less about power and security *within* Congo as it was about Belgium's own national security interests. In fact, according to him, it arose out of a drive to establish a "Belgian national redoubt" in Congo, to which the Belgian army could retreat in the event of a Soviet invasion in Europe. If this was the initial intention, however, this quickly changed.

As earlier described, transnational corporate interests were directly involved in the exploitation of the mineral rich province and thus the Kamina Military Base quickly became entangled in the complexities of Cold War politics. With Congolese uranium from Katanga having been used to produce the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs, the region and its

uranium deposits had become an important foundation of the US nuclear arsenal (Gijs 2016; Williams 2016). Indeed, because of its mineral reserves, the Katanga region was seen as a more likely target of Soviet attack than many places in Europe. Hence, as well as the existing economic interests, maintaining security and a firm hold in the region, quickly became the collective concern of the Western alliance more broadly. This points to the gravity of the 1960 crisis which threatened the common financial interests of Belgian, British, American and French imperialisms (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007). On the 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1960, when newly elected Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba made his passionate declaration that “the Republic of Congo has been proclaimed, and our country is now in the hands of its own children,” the Kamina military base became a site of contestation.

The victory of Lumumba was not viewed favourably by the “European industrialists who controlled Katanga.”<sup>94</sup> Lumumba, was seen by many within this alliance as a “militantly nationalist leader,” feared to be a communist. In contrast, another local leader, offered a strong political foothold for these interests to be served. Just one week after Lumumba’s declaration, Moïse Tshombe, leader of the political party *Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga* (CONAKAT), declared Katanga’s secession. It was the Belgian mining conglomerate the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga* (U.M.H.K.) established by the *Société Générale de Belgique* which offered substantial political support, arms, and money for Tshombe (Gibbs 1993). The Kamina Military Base itself was the site where Belgian troops (and later an army of expatriate mercenaries) were sent to assist with the recruitment, training and equipment of a large private army, the Katangan gendarmerie, which provided the backbone for the secession. Their ongoing presence in Kamina post-independence and without the agreement of the newly appointed Congolese Government, led in turn to a plea to the UN by Lumumba, who in October 1960 took control of the military base as part of the United Nations Operation in the Congo (Opération des Nations Unies au Congo).

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<sup>94</sup> This particular reference to the “European Industrialists who controlled Katanga” is borrowed from the articulation of two former diplomats employed by the United Nations who in 1992 made the claim that it was this cabal which were involved in the death of Dag Hammarskjöld (Gibbs 1993). For further articulations of such involvement in the Katanga Secession see Boehme (2005), Gijs (2016), Larmer & Kennes (2014) and Lemarchand (1962).

Still, whilst much analysis of the Katangese secession has emphasized the exogenous machinations behind the Katangese leaders, again drawing attention to the most tangible evidence of *duress* — the continuation of economic exploitation and political repression by external forces — into the post-colonial period, it is important to also recognize the agency of the local actors and the endogenous factors that contributed to the secession — which also carry more subtle evidence of *duress* as well as *endurance*. As Larmer and Kennes (2014, p. 749) argue, whilst Katangese secessionist leaders like Tshombe, have often been labelled “pro-Western” and are viewed as having acted as “puppets” of external forces, their claim to Katangese statehood was also based on “a constructed memory of pre-colonial greatness” alongside the assertion that “linked processes of demographic, economic and political change wrought by Belgian colonialism had undermined their legitimate claim to power, bringing ‘foreigners’ into their midst and (in the late colonial period) handing nascent state power to them.” The three salient features of the rapid transformation of this region during the colonial period, earlier described when commenting at the Kamina Railway station, as well as the earlier articulation of the role of Christian missionaries in creating a more fixed Luba-Katanga identity, all contribute to an understanding of the emergence of this authentic Katangese national identity.

In Kamina, the memory of this turbulent time of independence revealed itself through a story recounted during our dialogues in Kinkunki, parts of it repeated during later dialogues in Kamina.

During this time, in order to maintain the peace within Kamina and its environs, the late Grand Chef Kasongo Wa Nyembo gathered together a group of local chiefs and a diviner and performed a number of rituals to protect Kamina from attack. As a result, when militias of the Baluba from Kabongo arrived at the frontiers of Kasongo Wa Nyembo territory they were met by a swarm of bees which acted as a kind of a military force. Their stings acted as bullets and whomever entered the territory with a bad spirit or bad intentions would be killed immediately by such stings. In addition, another ritual performed during the same period released a smoke into the air above Kamina. As a result, pilots of planes flying overhead attempting to attack the city

were no longer able to see the city. Instead, all they could see was a great lake (Notables of the Luba Royal Court, dialogue #8, June, 2014).<sup>95</sup>

This story speaks to the use of metaphysical forces as a mechanism towards maintaining peace, and of the role of the *Mulopwe* (King) in executing such a peace. It also alludes to the varying political allegiances the two branches of the Luba-Katanga kingdoms, the *Chefferie of Kabongo* (in the more excluded and insulated North) and the *Chefferie of Kasongo Wa Nyembo* (towards the more industrialised South) engaged in during this time. Whilst the dialogue itself did not elucidate these allegiances, it is significant that the house in Kinkunki where this story was first shared with me, was built under the instruction of Moise Tshombe of CONAKAT during that time. I was told that Moise Tshombe asked the Belgians to construct this house as a gift, his recognition of King Kasongo Wa Nyembo as the “rightful” King in this region. In further chapters, I draw attention to the signs of *duress* of this historical political allegiance reverberating in our dialogues on *Búmùntù* from this locale. For now, I move to another site in Kamina which transitions us from the post-colonial past to the post-colonial present, placing the region in the context of the horrific violence of the Congo wars of the 1990s and the ongoing conflicts that continued to smoulder in their aftermath, thus also placing it in the context of the contemporary struggle for peace. Somewhat opportunely, it is the Guest House of the United Methodist Community earlier described as my first “home” in Kamina which offers this grounding.

### *A SITE OF GATHERING*

The Methodist Guest House is one of the few spaces around Kamina which — I am told — is considered appropriately equipped to accommodate the various missionaries, aid workers, government officials and other professionals, both international and national, who pass through Kamina. With a tall immaculately kept hedge re-enforcing an already secure barrier and security staff, it offers a protected space for those temporary guests from elsewhere whose apparent affluence might attract unwanted attention. It also offers the ceramic

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<sup>95</sup> This is a summary account taken from a much longer dialogue with the group of Notables in Kinkunki during the course of my fieldwork in Kamina (dialogue #8, June, 2014).

façade of modern amenities which, although no longer operational in their original sense, are still considered a substantial advance on the standard amenities available to the majority of Kamina's residents. Whilst the electricity supply can often cut out or offer such a low supply that the difference is barely noticeable, it is indeed still connected. It is for these reasons that the communal living space of the Methodist Guest House regularly becomes a dynamic space where various groups in Kamina for specific time limited purposes, coalesce.

My first one-month stay in Kamina was testament to this Guest House being a site of gathering. Initially, I shared it with a group of Red Cross staff who had arrived in Kamina to assist with the repatriation of a small group of ex-child soldiers (housed in an adjacent abode); despite their minor status, they had been discovered by the Red Cross at the Kamina Military Base undergoing the *brassage* process for reintegration in the national army. After them came a group of staff from UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) undertaking a public health campaign in neighbouring villages. A few professors from UNILU (University of Lubumbashi) there to provide a series of lectures for students from local universities also shared the space at various times. Mostly our paths crossed only briefly to share a meal, but, during my stay a more substantial coalescence occurred. In a dimly lit room, with brown faux velvet couches neatly arranged with doilies, a motley collection of temporary guests alongside the more permanent guest house staff, all eagerly assembled in front of a small, rather unreliable television set, assembled to catch the wins and losses of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. A decade earlier, however, in 2004, a more threatening event brought people together in this same space. At the request of the then governor of the Katanga Province Kisula Ngoy, Methodist Bishop Ntambo Nkulu Ntanda was tasked with organizing a conference bringing together Mai-Mai leaders, military officials from Kamina Military Base, government leaders, traditional chiefs, and interfaith religious authorities under one roof in order to resolve the ongoing violence, particularly in the north of the province. It was from this same communal living space, perched on the same brown faux velvet couches that much of the planning for this larger peace conference occurred.

To give context to such a conference, it is worth observing that in the years directly following the official end of the Congo Wars (2003-2006), the province of Katanga was labelled one of

the most violent yet neglected regions of the DRC (International Crisis Group 2006).<sup>96</sup> Echoing divisions that were established in our previous exploration of both the colonial and post-colonial past, an International Crisis Group (2006) report summarizes the three conflicts dominating during this period as 1) tensions between southerners and northerners, 2) tensions between outsiders and natives and 3) tensions between Mai-Mai militias and the national army. In reality, all of these conflicts were interwoven with each other in complex ways. Particularly relevant in setting the context for the gathering, were the tensions between Mai-Mai militias and the national army. The two Congo Wars had, in effect, militarized the north of the Katanga Province, with a large presence of Mai-Mai militias previously active during the war years. Some of these were “regulated” militias, also known as the *Forces d’Auto Protection* (FAP), originally established by the late President Laurent Kabila to prevent the militia *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD) assisted by the Rwandan Government from reaching the southern immensely mineral rich regions of Katanga. Recruited hastily and given weapons with little training, these “regulated” militias soon became a serious threat to the local population. Rather than disbanding once the enemy threat had disappeared, they instead took on a life of their own, fighting each other as well as the national army for control of taxes, poaching opportunities and mining concessions and in addition, pillaging villages, attacking civilians, and recruiting child soldiers. “Non-regulated” Mai Mai groups had also been formed, including former FAP groups who disbanded and transformed into new groups, as well as those who formed more spontaneously as popular defence movements against aggression from both RCD but also the former government army *Forces Armées Congolaises* (FAC). Although their violence was less documented, the new national army the *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) were also responsible for perpetrating violence against the local population during this period.

In light of this regional context, during and directly after the two Congo wars, the previously mentioned expression of Kamina as a place of “peace,” a “living room” where “if there are

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<sup>96</sup> See also Autesserre (2010) and Turner (2013). Whilst I have emphasized the years directly following the Congo Wars, it is important to note that this label has lasted much longer. A field report from Refugees International dated 2014 is titled “Katanga in Crisis” and draws attention to two serious conflicts that continue to persist (Brown & Boyce 2014).

wars, if you find yourself here, you are at ease” holds true. Having studied the local peace-building response of the United Methodist Church during this period, Couture (2016) describes how Kamina became a place of refuge for countless internally displaced persons fleeing from towns as far away as Kalemie, Moba, Nyunzu, and Manono, in the Tanganyika District of Katanga. Her account documents how Bishop Ntambo Nkulu Ntanda’s vision to “feed my people” began as a development dream to rebuild North Katanga, however when confronted with the context of the two Congo Wars, became a much larger, more complex, organic model of local religious peacebuilding. As she writes, confronted by the humanitarian crisis of the two Congo Wars to “feed my people” turned into: “caring for widows, orphans and sojourners; employing local and displaced people in church, parsonage and school construction and agricultural projects that supplemented the local food supply; organizing medical care; and building relationships with other religious, government, and military leaders and traditional chiefs” amongst other things (Couture 2016, p. 77).

To return to the communal living space of the Methodist Guest House as a site of gathering, to “feed my people” also involved gathering disparate groups together to find peace. Couture (2016) recounts certain of these events; for example, the then district superintendent Rev. Boniface Kabongo Ilunga was assigned to travel to Kaloko to convince the then infamous and much feared Mai-Mai leader, Chinja Chinja (cut throat), to attend the peace conference, largely influenced by his family connections with this feared leader. Mama Mujing and a group of widows staffing the Methodist orphanage were calming the fears of fifty-four war orphans while the Mai Mai leader was hosted in the same abode for the course of the conference. Methodist Bishop Ntambo Nkulu Ntanda invited this leader to his home for dinner as a powerful gesture of welcome, reminding all that the Mai-Mai are “children of the community” and first and foremost human beings. These stories provide accounts of ordinary people confronted with extraordinary challenges, rising above the pressure to divide, instead actively promoted unity and peace. Later, in our dialogues, this will be expressed as a time when *Búmùntù* intervened.



Figure Six: Photo of the memorial of the old steam locomotive at Kamina Railway Station, 2015

In this chapter you have been invited to “arrive” in Kamina and by visiting various sites of significance, you have been introduced to a contemporary landscape alive with the “past.” Evidently, many more sites exist in and around Kamina, each carrying rich histories equally relevant to our exploration of *Búmùntù* and the struggle for peace. Unfortunately, there is no way to capture the complexity and richness of contemporary Kamina in just one chapter or even in an entire thesis. Hence, closing this chapter should not be understood as an endpoint; the multi-levelled grounding in Kamina very much continues in the chapters which follow. Still, drawing this chapter to an appropriate transition point, I would like to return to the memorial of the old steam locomotive at Kamina Railway Station to interrogate the remaining two of the three plaques. The first of these reads as follows:

THIS SITE IS DEDICATED TO DG ILUNGA-ILUNKAMBA  
BY THE RAILWORKERS OF THE CENTRAL REGION IN MEMORY OF THE CATASTROPHY OF  
22/04/2014  
SIGNED DRC NTALASHA-LEMBA<sup>97</sup>

This plaque is a memorial which remembers the derailment of a freight train near Katongola bridge, about fifty kilometres from Kamina. As usual, despite designated for the transport of

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<sup>97</sup> Translated from the original: “Place dédiée au DG Ilunga-Ilunkamba, par les cheminots de la région centre en mémoire de la catastrophe du 22/04/2014, signe DRC Ntalasha-Lemba.”

goods, it was loaded with passengers including those seated on top of the carriages. More than 60 people were recorded to have lost their lives and many more injured. Such train derailments, however, are not uncommon occurrences, the dismal safety records just one indication of the state of disrepair of this rail network. In turn, they are an indication of the broader economic turmoil this region and the nation as a whole has continued to experience. If during the colonial period the establishment and rapid development of the *Compagnie du chemin de fer du bas-Congo au Katanga (BCK)* alongside the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga* (U.M.H.K.), had a profound economic, political and social impact on the region, the deterioration of the successors of these companies in the post-colonial period have had similarly profound impacts. The theme of disarray, disrepair and deficiency in the context of a region once labelled as a “veritable geological scandal” will regularly reappear in our dialogues in later chapters. It is however, the larger of the two plaques, which is more pertinent as we move towards a dialogue on *Búmuntù* and the struggle for peace. Whilst its size gives it more prominence, rather than replacing the original plaque, it sits directly below; this time painted in the blue, yellow and red of the Congolese flag, it reads:

FROM THE STEAM TRAIN OF LEOPOLD II,  
WITH THE NEW SERIES 1900,  
TO JOSEPH KABILA KABANGE  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
1906 AND 2015<sup>98</sup>

The comfortable juxtaposition of the current President Joseph Kabila Kabange and the notoriously ruthless Belgian despot King Leopold II might seem puzzling; it does, however, reflect the earlier discussion in *Chapter Two*, of a nostalgic veil in remembering the colonial past, where a speech of the current President paying homage to the dream of King Leopold II was cited (La Libre Belgique 2004). My purpose in ending this chapter with the 1906 and 2015 juxtaposition, like the preservation of the black, red and yellow colours of the Belgian flag on the initial plaque, is because it renders tangible the connectivities joining colonial pasts to postcolonial presents. As just one example, standing here at the Kamina Railway Station, Flory Sendwe recounted to me his memory of the 1992 mass exodus of the Luba-

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<sup>98</sup> Translated from the original: “De la Vapeur avec Leopold II, a la nouvelle série 1900, avec Joseph Kabila Kabange, President de la Republique, 1906 et 2015.”

Kasai population, the station crammed to capacity, countless bodies positioned there, awaiting transport to flee the violence that had erupted as a result of a prolonged political campaign blaming them for the economic woes of the province (dialogue #27, September, 2015). In our later dialogues on *Búmùntù*, we will hear a threat that such violence may be repeated. By emphasizing the 1906 and 2015 juxtaposition, I hope that such a threat will be understood in light of the historical antecedents provisionally captured in this chapter. It reminds us of the central contention of this thesis, that the struggle for peace occurs in the context of a contemporary global landscape intimately bound up in enduring legacies of colonialism and imperialism. Whilst in the following two chapters the focus will turn to the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*, it is this awareness that I ask you to hold, as the many intimations of its relevance for the struggle for peace will gradually unfold and reveal themselves throughout these chapters, to be addressed more concretely in *Chapter Nine*.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: “TO BE” IS TO BE IN HARMONY WITH ...

In the opening to this thesis, *Búmùntù* was introduced as an elusive concept, immensely difficult to define. When framed, however, in a condensed form through the statement: “*Kwikala I (Kwikala biya ne) Bantu*” (“to be” is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings,) it appeared to place peace (expressed more often in terms of social harmony) as the defining characteristic of our humanness. Having now arrived in Kamina and grounded ourselves in the terrain, it is this question of the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù* that will be our central consideration. Leaving aside the more abstract explorations of *Búmùntù* in the literature, it is in this chapter that we will begin to hear the voices of the many individuals and communities who generously contributed to our dialogues in Kamina and its environs. As noted earlier, the voices presented here are just some of the many individuals and communities I was blessed to engage with. As well, they only represent some of the many diverse perspectives alive in Kamina and its environs today. Nevertheless, together, they provide a powerful contest to dominant narratives of humanness, violence and peace critiqued earlier.

Before proceeding, I draw attention to two related points; firstly, the purpose of this chapter naturally necessitates a better understanding of the *term Búmùntù*. Mirroring our dialogues then, the chapter seeks first to elucidate the term as utilized in Kamina today. Obviously, this should not create an expectation of a neatly delineated definition. Instead, as already alluded to, its elusive nature was well and truly confirmed in our dialogues where a multiplicity of voices agreed with and contested each other.<sup>99</sup> Like the previous chapter, then, this and subsequent chapters offer a similar sense of a *wandering*, a movement around the elusive term *Búmùntù*, where from different angles different insights are offered. A second associated point regarding my own presence within these relational and dialogical encounters also needs restating. Whilst this chapter elucidates the term *Búmùntù* as utilized in Kamina today, it is not a detached or objective interrogation of a term. The greater pursuit

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<sup>99</sup> It is worth observing a distinction between two terms, whose differentiation is in tonality alone. *Búmùntù*, referring to a plethora of qualities that describe the fact of being human and *Búmùntù*, the focus of this study, referring to a plethora of qualities that describe the fact of being “authentically” human. Nevertheless, despite the existence of tonal variations, we will still encounter a multiplicity of meanings within the one term *Búmùntù*.

of peace at the centre of this thesis was forever present within our dialogues. As this chapter shows, I have been an active participant in our dialogues; my questions were directed to elucidating the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*. The individuals and communities with whom I engaged were conscious of the pursuit of peace being at the fore and they shared with me their perspectives on *Búmùntù* accordingly. It is, therefore, the relational and dialogical encounter which creates the context to the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù* presented in this chapter.

### *AN ALTERNATIVE CREATION STORY*

In the beginning, there was nothing. Then came the first creation. A creation of God Himself, and his entourage,<sup>100</sup> who were brought into being through the Word of God alone. Then came the second creation. A creation of our physical world. Beginning with the basic physical structure of this world, and then extending towards a fashioning of the many things of this world, brought into being by a combination of elements. A fashioning led by God, but with the support of his entourage. It was like this that the first human being was created. God instructed three celestial beings to create a form which would be “in our image.” It was the celestial being of the earth who, from clay, sculpted the initial human form. Then, a celestial being of water, who poured water within this human form. Followed by a celestial being of fire, who placed fire within this human form. Until, finally the form was ready. And God, breathed life into this first human being. A *Kilume-Kinkaji* (an intersex being), one who possesses both male and female sexual organs. Unable to reproduce, he<sup>101</sup> lived on this newly created earth for many years alone. Until after between 39 to 40 years, he became conscious of his loneliness. At which

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<sup>100</sup> Although I have used the term “His entourage” here, in the extended dialogue numerous terms were used including “His entourage,” “His Government,” “the Elders”, “His college of Elders,” “His disciples,” and “His angels.” The diverse vocabulary used to express this set of divinities is once again indicative of the intersection of Luba and Christian traditions, leaving the precise constituency of this “entourage” unclear.

<sup>101</sup> Although possessing both male and female sexual organs, the narrators consistently use the male pronoun in reference to this first person. And, when questioned, assert that “he” is understood to be male.

point, he asked God, “Why is it that all the animals are created in pairs, of male and female? Why is it that I do not also have a pair?” And so, God responded to this complaint by causing him to fall into a deep sleep and then taking his left side to create the first woman. When he woke up to find a woman staring at him, he exclaimed: “Wako, welcome stranger.” To which the woman became angry « It is you who have woken to find me here already. Who is more of a stranger than the other?” (Bulopwe Bwamulao Wa Bana Banshi, dialogue #43, September, 2015.)<sup>102</sup>

The above account of a “beginning” is a creation narrative offered in a dialogue with three religious leaders, Papa Ndala, Papa Ngoy and Papa Mbuya all from the *Bulopwe Bwamulao Wa Bana Banshi* (The Missionary Church of Mage for the Reunification and the Kingdom of Promise of the Children of this Land) (dialogue #43, September, 2015). As one of several churches in and around Kamina that identify as “traditional,” these religious leaders are known for their active promotion of a return to an authentic Luba religious belief and practice. This narrative represents a clear alternative to the sound of a bolide exploding in a shower of rainbow hue also offered as an authentic Luba account. In opening this chapter with an alternative creation story encountered in the course of our dialogues in Kamina, my purpose is to expand on the earlier provocation that engaging with *Búmùntù* is to struggle with fundamental conceptions of our world and our own “being-in-the-world.” This time, I offer it also as a concrete example of how the ontological landscape to which we have “arrived,” just like the physical landscape introduced in the preceding chapter, is equally alive with the “past;” equally carrying enduring legacies of colonialism and imperialism.

The contrast between the more enigmatic account of a bolide in the first creation story and the account of an anthropomorphous God who, along with His entourage, fashions the world into being, should not go unnoticed. Indeed, there are many parallels present between this creation narrative and a Judeo-Christian biblical genesis: a being created through the “Word of God,” a God who “breathed life into this first human being,” a being who lived alone until God created him a pair. This, I suggest, is already an indication of the ongoing impact of the

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<sup>102</sup> This story is derived from a much longer dialogue with three religious leaders, Papa Ndala, Papa Ngoy and Papa Mbuya (dialogue #43, September, 2015.) It is condensed into story form for readability.

Christianisation of Luba cosmology described in the previous chapter. The fact that my search for a uniquely Luba creation yielded few other responses further indicates the pervasiveness of this impact. On the relative absence of such 'authentic' creation narratives, a local Elder and intellectual, Ilunga Kimilundu Tharcisse (dialogue #16, July, 2014), told me: "there were legends which spoke of it (creation) but those who knew these legends have since disappeared." Hence, the biblical genesis narrative most often arose in our dialogues. Indeed, because of the apparent infallibility of the biblical narrative, I was specifically advised by a member of the Luba Cultural Centre (an initiative of the Catholic Church), to dismiss the above creation account. This is indicative, not only of the ongoing impact of an historic Christianisation of Luba cosmology, but more so, of the way in which such a historic process endures into the present moment.

Importantly, echoing the themes of *duress* and *endurance* introduced in earlier chapters, one can witness both resistance against and receptivity to such a transformative process in the dialogue with the three religious leaders from the *Bulopwe Bwamulao Wa Bana Banshi*. Although, the above creation narrative is suggestive of the rich entanglement of the Luba and Christian worlds, their acute awareness of the historical and continued marginalisation of Luba religious belief and practice by an often-violent imposition of Christianity and their determination to reclaim a uniquely Luba religious belief and practice in a contemporary Kamina was not only directly communicated through our dialogues, but, in fact, it appears as a central aspect of their theology. Amongst their core teachings is the belief in five gods who were initially ordained by the Supreme God, KAFULA MOBA, each have responsibility for one of the five continents of the world. Whilst their powers and responsibilities were clearly demarcated by KAFULA MOBA, the god Jehovah is said to have become greedy for power and began to intrude on the territory of the other gods. Accordingly, it is taught that to see Africa once again flourishing in line with God's original plan, Africans must return to the worship of their own god, Kalumba Kamaweji. For the three religious leaders, the revitalization of *Búmùntù* (and the peace associated with it) is very much seen as part of such a return to an authentic Luba religious belief and practice.

This is particularly significant in the current chapter; although the basic question of the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù* regularly invoked references to both the

temporal — “in the time of our ancestors” — and the spatial — “in the villages” — suggestive of a *Búmùntù* associated with a more fixed or static “tradition,” this creation account disrupts such an imagined “tradition.” It is a powerful example of how even those perspectives on *Búmùntù* identified as “traditional” are, in fact, deeply embedded in a post-colonial context. Indeed, although identified as a “traditional” church, “*Bulopwe Bwamulao Wa Bana Banshi*” is in fact a relatively young religious organization, arising in the post-colonial context through the teachings of the late Ngoy Mukenji, a local prophet. This relative “youth” is common amongst several churches identifying as “traditional” in Kamina today.

The continuation of the above alternative creation narrative, featuring the concept of *Búmùntù* and offering one perspective on its relationship to peace and violence, is one of the more concrete examples of this:

When God created the first intersex human being “in our image,” he was perfect. He was given *Búmùntù*. He truly expressed *Búmùntù*. The problem of violence did not exist. There was no evil. He lived in harmony with his surrounds. There was one Kingdom, one Power. However, when God divided this human being into male and female, the power was also divided. There were now two Kingdoms. The Kingdom of Man and the Kingdom of Woman. The Power of Man and the Power of Woman. This meant that in order to accomplish the will of God, the man and the woman needed to be united. However, the angels had grown jealous. Whilst they had worked alongside God to form the first intersex being, it was God alone who had breathed life into him, and in doing so had given him reign over the earth without the accord of the angels. The division of power between the man and the woman, then, was seen as an opportunity for the angels to seize power themselves. Their opportunity was through the woman who was weak to their influence because, like them, she had been formed through the Word of God also. One of the angels (a serpent) began visiting her in secret and sharing with her the secrets of the world. He taught her the art of fetishism and sorcery and how to navigate the world in spirit. He then had sexual relations with her and taught her how to seduce the man. However, the angel forbade her from sharing her knowledge of fetishism and sorcery with the man. This

meant that the Kingdom of Man and the Kingdom of Woman remained divided. It is from this time that there has been the destruction of *Búmùntù*.

This is a truly intriguing moment, extending the earlier tension between first man and first woman to a more profound rupture resulting in the destruction of *Búmùntù*. However, at this point, I simply intend to draw attention to the close parallel between this account (which positions both *Búmùntù* and the destruction thereof as a more foundational existential condition) and the Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin from the biblical genesis; a perfect creation which is subsequently tainted by a serpent's corrupting of the first woman. It is a particularly pertinent example given in the earlier chapters of this thesis I made reference to the argument of a "pessimistic" trend in the history of Western thought and its influence on the study of human violence. It offers a concrete example of how the Christianisation of Luba cosmology, and more broadly the (modern) Western philosophical and political traditions explored in earlier chapters, can have a direct influence on contemporary expressions of the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*. It affirms my earlier argument regarding border thinking, not only acknowledging and valorising the existence of a plurality of ontological systems and traditions previously denigrated, suppressed and marginalized, but also acknowledging that such systems and traditions have existed at the borders of the discourse of the modern/colonial world system, not irrespective to, but alongside, in response to, and in struggle against, its violent apparatus.

### *ON ESSENCE AND BEYOND*

*We are standing on a mine, friends. A mine which is rich with gems. However, many of us don't realize. Ubuntu has become a global phenomenon. The world is talking about this concept of Ubuntu because leaders in South Africa have nourished it. But let us not forget where it came from?... We need to articulate it for ourselves. We need to express it to the world too.*

*(Rev. Boniface Kabongo Ilunga, dialogue #22, August, 2015)*

The words of the late Rev. Boniface Kabongo Ilunga, Methodist Pastor and Director of the Institut Supérieure Pédagogique (ISP) of Kamina, marked the beginning of a rather lengthy address introducing me and my purpose in Kamina. Highlighting the global interest that emerged through the revitalization of *Ubuntu* in post-apartheid South Africa, Rev. Kabongo offered the following argument: articulations of *Ubuntu* in the South African context have been a largely reduced form of a more “authentic” *Búmùntù* preserved by the Luba. Reminding the gathering of the vast influence of Luba culture in Central and Southern Africa at large, he argued that it is time that the Luba also articulate and express their concept of *Búmùntù* to the world. The address occurred in the living room of that large brick house, temporarily donated to Professor Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha to support his work in Kamina and serving as our home during our second field trip, as I have already detailed. On this occasion, our living room was filled with a collection of Professors and Teaching Assistants from the three local universities and some community leaders from local NGOs invited to contribute to a group dialogue on the theme of *Búmùntù*. As an entry point to my second field trip, this group dialogue was organized to test my evolving understanding of *Búmùntù*, developed during my initial field trip and to gather perspectives on a way forward for the research. A large part of the dialogue arose from the opening statement of Rev. Kabongo alongside my presentation of three key facets of *Búmùntù* (as it is expressed today) which I had identified during my initial field trip; *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being; *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony with our fellow human beings; and *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony within society (or within a specific social and cultural milieu). Although not representing distinct categories, these facets had been fluidly interwoven throughout my dialogues and so I was keen to approach a fundamental question: how can this apparently complex multi-faceted concept be reduced to a more simple statement such as “*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*” (a person is a person through other persons) in the South African context, or “*Kwikala I (Kwikala biya ne) Bantu*” (“to be” is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings)” in the Luba context? This is a particularly significant question for the current exploration of the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*, given that it was the central placement of peace within this more condensed statement which has motivated this thesis.

To enter into this group dialogue and the various reflections which arose, I begin with an overview of these above three key facets, including three voices whose articulations of *Búmùntù* emphasise one of each of these facets.<sup>103</sup> Firstly, already alluded to in the above alternative creation story and the description of the human being created “in our image,” is the expression of *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being by way of its creation,<sup>104</sup> where *Muntu* (human being) signifies one who is born, who respire, who thinks, who feels etc. According to such a definition, by “being” *Muntu* (human being) one is naturally deserving of a deep respect.

*Búmùntù* signifies the human dignity inherent in the being « Muntu, » this is to mean the ensemble of human values of the “Muntu.” Note that the human character is sacred for each “Muntu,” this is to say without distinction of sex, or territory (Prof. Phînéés Yumba Musoya, dialogue #52, October, 2015).

Second, the expression of *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony with our fellow human beings,<sup>105</sup> where *Muntu* signifies one who exemplifies a plethora of moral qualities (or virtues) centring on the “*savoir vivre avec les autres*” (*knowhow to live with others*) including: *Kanye* (*Kindness*), *Kutambula Bantu* (*Hospitality*), *Buntu* (*Generosity*), *Sangaji* (*Joy*), *Kwishipeja* (*Humility*), *Kwilemeka et kulemeka* (*Respect (for oneself and for others)*), *Kwilunga pamo ne bantu* (*Solidarity*), *Bunvu* (*Shame/Modesty*), *Bubinebine* (*truthfulness*), *Kanemo* (*Respect*) amongst others. In contrast to the emphasis on “being” previously described, here the emphasis is instead placed on a “becoming.” This refers to an earned dignity which goes beyond the innate dignity of the human being by way of its creation. Accordingly, one can “become” *Muntu* (human being) by way of one’s behaviour, one’s ability to live in harmony with others. It is through such behaviour that one gains their full value and earns their full human dignity.

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<sup>103</sup> These are just some of the responses offered by individuals to the basic question: “What is the meaning of the term *Búmùntù*?” A more comprehensive collection of responses (although not exhaustive), grouped by these three themes, can be found in *Appendix G: Three key facets of Búmùntù*.

<sup>104</sup> Such responses emphasized the “value,” “divinity,” and/or “dignity” of the human being which was associated with a divine creation. This is also captured in the Luba proverb “Muntu I Kipangwa kya Vidye” (a human being is a divine creature) as well as the responses of “Eyo Vidje” and “Eyo Mwa” (yes, my God or yes, divine one) which were used to introduce *Búmùntù* in the opening of this thesis. For more examples of such responses see *Appendix G: Three key facets of Búmùntù*.

<sup>105</sup> Such responses emphasized *Búmùntù* as a form of “humanism,” and highlighted the effect of such behavior as being able to bring about “peace,” “social harmony,” “joy” and “justice” within society as a whole.

Búmùntù: this is to mean the way to live socially with other people. It is not division. Here, amongst the Baluba, it is to live in harmony with others, in peace with others. This is Búmùntù. (Rev. Ilunga Mwepu Dikonzo Edmond, dialogue #28, September, 2015)

Finally, is the expression of *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony within society (or within a specific social and cultural milieu). Evidently, this is closely aligned to the second facet, however the emphasis on “society” is carried over through an emphasis on adherence to culture, customs and/or societal expectations.<sup>106</sup> Once again, this also presents a “becoming,” however, this time one “becomes” a *Muntu* (human being) by meeting a set of societal expectations or codes of behaviour through which one in turn gains their full value and earns their full human dignity. A *Muntu*, thus, signifies one who fulfils their role and function within society in accordance with their gender, age and stage of life; one who has been initiated; has been married; has had children; adheres to various laws or various customary practices such as dietary restrictions or protocols regarding appropriate attire and so forth. In line with this, *Búmùntù* is represented as a multi-faceted “oeuvre” of beliefs, values and practices which traverse ethical, legal, political, social and cultural terrains. Again, it is through such a fulfilment of one’s role and function within society that one gains their full value and earns their full human dignity.

*Búmùntù* is first and foremost, someone with value. It is someone who maintains the customs (Ruth Mwange, dialogue #26, August, 2015).

Importantly, whilst this latter facet was equally present within our dialogues, the more rigid expressions of this facet which seemed to equate “our *Búmùntù*” with “our culture,” were also regularly contested. One such contest has already been heard through the voice of Prof. Phînéés Yumba Musoya (dialogue #52, October, 2015) when he noted the sacred inherent in the human being “without distinction of sex, or territory.” This was expressed elsewhere in

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<sup>106</sup> Such responses also emphasized the “value” of the human being, however, this “value” was associated with their position “within society,” or those “qualities” of their “personality,” “character,” “identity” which “respond to the requirements of the society.” Again, see *Appendix G: Three key facets of Búmùntù* for more examples of such responses.

the assertion that: “*Búmùntù* can, at a certain moment, transcend culture ... it is the value that allows me to say “no, no, even if culturally it’s like that, me, because of the humanity I feel within me, I will do it like this” (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015).

Having offered these three key facets, I now return to the group dialogue and the fundamental question: how can this apparently complex multi-faceted concept be reduced to a more simple statement such as “*Kwikala I (Kwikala biya ne) Bantu*” (“to be” is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings)? In response to such a question a robust discussion erupted. According to Rev. Kabongo, *Búmùntù* is a concept which, “like an onion,” contains a multitude of layers all bound together to create the whole. The three key facets that I presented represent useful cursory categories within which the many layers reside.

According to him, simplified articulations of *Ubuntu* emphasizing solidarity, communitarianism, or unity, create an almost exclusive focus on just one layer. Emphasizing the articulations on the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being, Rev. Kabongo argued instead that *Búmùntù* is not only defined by its relationality, but also by the internal moral qualities relating to the human relationship with the sacred. Other individuals in the room supported this assertion, particularly regarding the inadequacy of terms such as solidarity, communitarianism, or unity to capture the multi-faceted nature of *Búmùntù*.

There was, however, less agreement, regarding the extent to which the “relationality” of *Búmùntù* can be seen as merely one layer akin to those many other layers. One voice, from a Professor of Sociology at the University of Kamina, asserted persuasively that whilst it is true that this relationality does not encompass *Búmùntù*, it does express a fundamental quality, an essence, which is central. Indeed, to use the metaphor of the onion, one might place this relationality as the core around which all other layers grow.

Whilst there was no easy conclusion, the group dialogue did reach a general consensus; that the ontological statement *Kwikala I (Kwikala biya ne) Bantu* (“to be” is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings) was an appropriate representation of an essence, but that this did not negate the presence of a more complex and multi-layered concept including the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being as well as a multi-faceted “oeuvre” of beliefs,

values and practices which traverse ethical, legal, political, social and cultural terrains.<sup>107</sup> The reality of *Búmùntù* as a complex multi-faceted concept is suggestive of the way in which contemporary expressions of *Búmùntù* can substantially change according to each new voice. In the current group dialogue, it seems significant that a Methodist pastor emphasized the internal moral qualities of *Búmùntù*, whilst a sociology professor emphasized the relational qualities of *Búmùntù*. A more striking example occurred during the same group dialogue when the requirement to undergo initiation rituals as one mark of *Búmùntù* entered the dialogue. Whilst this was a quality of *Búmùntù* arising during our dialogues in the villages, in the context of this dialogue amongst professionals in the city such a mark was contested when one individual posed the question: “but how many of us in this room have actually been initiated? Does this mean we are not *Muntu*?” Once again, this reminds us that whilst our dialogues on *Búmùntù* regularly invoked references to the temporal — “in the time of our ancestors” — and the spatial — “in the villages,” — these are still contemporary expressions of *Búmùntù* which carry a multiplicity of influences, both endogenous and exogenous.

### ***BÚMÙNTÙ: TO LIVE IN SOCIAL HARMONY***

*No matter what profession you might learn in the world, it will not suffice. No matter who you might be, it will not suffice. But what completes you, is the knowhow to live in harmony with others.*

*(Longwa Banza Gary, dialogue #4, June—July, 2014)*

Having now established a better understanding of the term *Búmùntù* in the context of contemporary Kamina, we are now more able to explore the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*. Given the above affirmation of the statement: *Kwikala I (Kwikala biya ne) Bantu* (“to be” is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings) as essence of

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<sup>107</sup> In the following chapter, I will enter into a more in-depth exploration of a mutual reciprocity between *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being and *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony with our fellow human beings. I will, in turn, explore the way these two facets of *Búmùntù* intersect with *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony within society (or within a specific social and cultural milieu).

*Búmùntù*, it is perhaps unsurprising that the strong relationship between peace and *Búmùntù* was regularly confirmed throughout our dialogues. This was certainly the case in response to the direct question: “how is peace understood through the concept of *Búmùntù*?” (and the associated question “how is violence understood?”). The above response from Longwa Banza Gary is one such example, where he drew upon the original proverb: “*Bwino bonso ke Bwino, Bwino I kwikala ne Bantu*” (All knowledge is not knowledge, the only true knowledge is to know how to live in harmony with our fellow human beings). His statement, as with our dialogues more broadly, appear to affirm the earlier supposition that the concept of *Búmùntù* places peace (expressed more often as social harmony) as the defining characteristic of our humanness. In line with this, for the most part individuals and communities presented violence as being outside, opposed to, or even the antithesis of *Búmùntù*. This is heard clearly in a statement from Nikolas Ngola Kalowa (dialogue #45, October, 2015) that: “there is no violence within *Búmùntù*. But outside there is violence.” An even more powerful assertion is heard from Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert:

There will be no conflict. No! There will not even be the problem of domination, of exploitation, of dehumanisation, of humiliation. Because (within *Búmùntù*) one considers the other as his fellow creature, alike himself, with a mutual respect. (Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert, dialogue #30, September, 2015)

In the same way that one who creates violence or conflict goes against their fundamental obligation, one who does nothing to prevent conflict and/or resolve conflict also goes against this fundamental obligation. In fact, our confrontation with situations of conflict and our ability to surmount such experiences of conflict become one of the defining features of *Búmùntù*.

This means one is human, that which differentiates us from animals, who can after a moment start to fight. But for the *Búmùntù*, even when the other starts to manifest inhumane behaviour, so the *Búmùntù* permits us to master and to control the situation, reflecting the “personality” (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015).

As is evident, in the above expression of *Búmùntù*, it is not presented as an innate or inherent state, but instead as a moral ideal, an expectation, or recommendation which individuals and communities are obliged to strive towards in order to create harmonious relations, and thus peace, within society.

« Kwikala ne Bumuntu » This is to say — you must have purely human behaviour, to live humanism, to behave in a humane way. It is not to treat your fellow human beings in a violent manner. In an inhumane manner. It is a recommendation. It demands of everyone to live humanism, to be on good terms with everyone, to understand everyone. You must have pro-social behaviour, be approachable, to have dignified behaviour, to be acceptable, to be admirable. It is a recommendation to live like this, to be truly human, to be truly responsible, to have a dignified conduct, to be an exemplary (Flory Sendwe, dialogue #27, September, 2015).

Importantly, such an expectation may be expressed as so strong that the failure to adhere to this can result in one being seen as less, or even no longer, human.

Within the *Búmùntù* paradigm, one can say that conflictual individuals are as if men with no morals. “Bakolomona myanda ou bokolomona divita bitupu” (He provokes problems or conflicts for nothing.) “Kabunji kolomwena nsimba lufu” (Kabunji has caused the death of Nsimba) (Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse, dialogue #16, July, 2014).

*Búmùntù* means the knowhow to be, and the knowhow to live in the society. Here, when one says “I muntu” (he is a human being), it means this is someone with a good character, who knows how to live with others. If you don’t have *Búmùntù*, you are considered someone who is not social, you are no longer Muntu. One can even consider you (in a pejorative sense) “Kintu” (a thing). But a “Muntu” is a being, a being who must adapt, who must create peace with others, create a movement of life (Longwa Banza Gary, dialogue #4, June-July, 2014).

The tension between this expression of the loss of one's status as "human" resulting from "antisocial" behaviour and the earlier affirmation of the sacred and inviolable dignity of all human beings by way of their creation should not go unnoticed. Indeed, it may even bring to mind criticisms of *Ubuntu* identified earlier of how *Ubuntu* in South Africa has been used to foster conformity and stifle dissent. I will return to explore this tension in the next chapter. Here, I maintain the emphasis presented to me in direct response to the question about the relationship between peace and *Búmùntù*. In accordance with the earlier literature emphasizing the potential of *Ubuntu/Búmùntù* for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa, these dialogues, for the most part, emphasized *Búmùntù*, as a productive peace enhancing and maintaining concept that has powerful potential in contributing to the struggle for peace.

### ***TO EAT IN PEACE, SHARE WELL: AN EXCURSION INTO PROVERBS***

*Wisdom allows us to collaborate well, to live well together (with others). Even when there is a conflict, when there are problems, someone can come and he can challenge you with a proverb, and this proverb is to bring you to a place where you can think in a different way, to think of others. This proverb can make you return, even if you have already gone very far (into the conflict) and you have not found a solution. He can challenge you with only one proverb, and the wisdom of this proverb, can cause you to think in another way, to resolve this problem.*

*(Longwa Banza Gary, dialogue #4, June-July, 2014)*

In order to extend upon the above assertion of the central place of peace within *Búmùntù*, I will now enter into an exploration of a small collection of Luba proverbs. As suggested by the above assertion by Longwa Banza Gary, proverbs, or the wise use of proverbs, can be seen as a mechanism for the peaceful resolution of conflict, or more broadly, for maintaining peace within Luba society. Even more so, however, and particularly pertinent for the current exploration, proverbs can be seen as the "tools" that are used to transfer to the next generation a community's cultural traditions and folklore, as well as the "codes of behaviour"

expected of individuals within society (Chilisa 2012, p. 132). As Chilisa (2012, p. 132) writes, in this way proverbs can be seen to express “the very soul of a society.” Such a view is expressed also in the preface written by Mbale Kilumba to a publication of the Luba Cultural Centre in Kamina; “*Nkindi Ya Kiluba*” (*Proverbs Kiluba*). Here, proverbs are described as “the crucible of the wisdom of a people” (Centre Culturel Buluba n.d, p. 9). It is perhaps unsurprising then that “proverbs extolling community life” are plentiful in Luba oral literature (Mwembo 2007, p. 75). In light of this, during my initial field trip to Kamina, following a more general question on the meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*, I asked individuals and communities whether there were proverbs which spoke to the theme of peace. Whilst a more comprehensive list of the proverbs identified can be found in *Appendix H: Proverbs*, a smaller collection of these were adopted and integrated into my guiding questions during my secondary field trip, prompting individuals and communities to reflect on their meaning in order to draw out the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*.<sup>108</sup> There was considerable consensus regarding the meaning of these proverbs and so here, I share these proverbs and just some of the many voices that offered their meaning.

### **Kudja talala ikwabana biya (to eat in peace, share well)**

Through the metaphor of sharing food, this proverb is said to express the value of the equal distribution of wealth/resources as a key element of a peaceful and harmonious society. As expressed by Prof. Phînéés Yumba Musoya (dialogue #52, October, 2015) “to eat in peace, it is necessary to know how to share fairly. In brief: equitable sharing creates peace.” In line with this, the unequal distribution of wealth itself is seen as a form of violence. This was expressed by Nikolas Ngola Kalowa (dialogue #45, October, 2015) as follows: “Yes, it is violence because what did you do to have and what did we do to not have? Why do you have to go very high and we stay very low?” This establishes the theme of an inextricable relationship between peace and social justice which was common throughout our dialogues.

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<sup>108</sup> In *Chapter Nine* these proverbs will also reappear to provoke reflection on the struggle for peace in the contemporary landscape.

### **Twayayi ibantu kashiku kobe wa enda? (with unity there is strength)**

Moving on from the value of the equal distribution of wealth/resources, this proverb expresses that to have success in any endeavour, we need co-operative action. Accordingly, a lack of harmony and unity in society is seen as impeding development and progress. This was expressed by a man in the Village of Ntala (dialogue #36, September, 2015) as follows: “to succeed at anything, it is necessary to have people by your side, the thought of a single person will result in nothing.” A woman in the Village of Katongola (dialogue #54, October, 2015), drew attention to the way in which this proverb expresses the term “kwikukila” (the collective response to a call for help.)

### **Dyabutula ngulungu, ki.mungu nandi ka.same butombe. (the hyena rejoices at the antelope’s birth)**

This proverb refers to an encounter between two animals, *ngulungu* (antelope) and *kimungu* (hyena). The insinuation is that the hyena, a carnivorous animal, smelling the blood of the new birth, is rejoicing not because of the success and joy of his fellow creature in bringing another being into the world, but because of the meat that he will soon devour. An alternative semantic translation found in the publication of the Luba Cultural Centre *Nkindi Ya Kiluba* (Kiluba Proverbs) is given thus: “What animosity! You want to harm the success of others” (Centre Culturel Buluba n.d, p. 28). It is a proverb which is used as a criticism of *nshikanyi*, a term in Kiluba which has varying translations as *la haine* (*hatred*); *la jalousie* (*jealousy*); *la sorcellerie* (*witchcraft*); *la mauvaise foi* (*bad faith*); and *mauvaise intention* (*bad/evil intention*). Ultimately, it speaks against both thoughts and actions which cause the suffering of another, thus disturbing the harmony in society. According to Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte (dialogue #46, October, 2015) “with this proverb, one is asking people not to harm the weak, or those who are inferior. They must be considered as human beings just like you. One must respect their dignity, although they are weak.”

**Kwa mukulu kikaiko ke kubulwe kikakutwala (never neglect anyone in society, in the community or in the family)**

Finally, this last proverb admonishes against the rejection or exclusion of anyone in society. Most often, the example given related to the status of Elders in society, with the proverb being used to remind the community that Elders are a vital resource. This is seen in the following response:

This proverb tells of someone who swears “me, going to this old person, it is impossible,” forgetting that the wisdom is always with the old people.....When you say that you will never go and see the sage, it is because you don’t have a problem yet, but the day that you will have a problem which is beyond you, you will go there to consult the wise (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015).

Whilst the example offered most commonly related to Elders, this proverb was also applied more broadly. In, for example, the story of a man who is rudely scolding young children on the road whilst passing them, only to find that his motor bike breaks down and he needs their help. Or in the story of brothers that are in conflict, and one brother swears that he will never speak to his brother again, only to find that a problem arises and he is in need of his brother’s aid. Ultimately, according to Prof. Phînéés Yumba Musoya (dialogue #52, October, 2015) this proverb reminds that within society “everyone is indispensable.” As can be seen in these examples, it also asserts the value of resolving conflicts within all one’s relationships, that even if a current conflict has caused a rift in a relationship, a time will come when that relationship will be needed.

As stated above, these are just a small collection of proverbs from a more comprehensive list of proverbs that were identified by individuals and communities as speaking to the theme of peace associated with *Búmùntù*. A more comprehensive entry into Luba oral literature would no doubt offer many more insights. However, together these extend upon the above expression of the centrality of peace within *Búmùntù*. Moving beyond the emphasis of the condemnation of violence, and the capacity to surmount violence within *Búmùntù*, these proverbs are suggestive of a broader peace associated with *Búmùntù*, where peace is seen

not only in the absence of violence, but also in the equal distribution of wealth; the active participation of individuals in collective co-operative action; in the restraint of all thoughts and actions which cause the suffering of another; and in the valorisation of each individual in society. I argue that this is suggestive of a “relational peace” with an emphasis on social justice, social cohesion and human rights amongst other factors.

### ***BÚMUNTÙ: A MORAL IDEAL OR AN ONTOLOGICAL RELATIONAL REALITY?***

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the term *Búmùntù* in Kamina today and the place and meaning of peace associated with it. Throughout, however, there have been intimations of an ontological landscape in transition and its influence on contemporary expressions of *Búmùntù*. A particularly relevant aspect of the meaning of peace needs more attention. In the above dialogues, *Búmùntù* (and the peace associated with it) has regularly been presented as a moral ideal, expectation, or recommendation. This was consistent with dominant expressions of *Búmùntù* arising through our dialogues. During my time in Kamina, however, there were also many indications of *Búmùntù* as a more fundamental ontological “relational reality.” To explore this further, I return to the alternative creation account opening this chapter, placing it alongside early articulations of Luba ontology which, in *Chapter Two*, were introduced through Tempels’ 1945 *Bantu Philosophy*. My purpose in revisiting Tempels is not to confirm or contest his account, I have already made reference to the many criticisms of his work. I do suggest, however, that a reflection on an early account of Luba ontology documented almost eighty years ago can stimulate further reflection and enhance our understanding of contemporary expressions of *Búmùntù* in Kamina today.

First, in reflecting upon the statement that “when God created the first intersex human being “in our image,” he was perfect;” it is worth noting the echo of the biblical *Genesis 1:20*: “Let us make mankind in our image.” If taking Tempels’ perspective (which was very much a part of the Christianisation process referred to earlier), this echo, is not only indicative of missionary influence, it is also indicative of a fundamental harmony between the Luba and Judeo-Christian concept of a continual bond between creature and Creator (Tempels 1959, p. 28). Such a perspective was repeated throughout our dialogues in Kamina, many individuals

emphasizing that the introduction of Christianity, whether perceived as overthrow or enrichment, occurred on top of an already intense religiosity characteristic of Luba peoples, emphasizing their belief in a Supreme God.<sup>109</sup> The notion that *Búmùntù* represents more than a moral ideal, expectation or recommendation is most powerfully captured in the above articulations of *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being, created in the image of Creator. Whether the moral ideal to respect the dignity of others is adhered to or not, the dignity of the “Person” endures regardless; in the words of Nikolas Ngole Kalowa (dialogue #45, October, 2015): “the concept of *Búmùntù* does not change, because it is human value and human dignity which does not change.”

Reflecting further on the above alternative creation narrative, it can be said that the statement “when God created the first intersex human being “in our image,” he was perfect” takes on a different meaning in a narrative featuring the presence not only of a Supreme God, but also “His entourage” participating in the fashioning of the human being and the many things of this world.”<sup>110</sup> Their presence in the narrative offers a contemporary expression of the Luba belief that the human relationship with a Supreme God is mediated through a complex network of lesser divinities, including both *Mikishi* or *Bavidje* (various spirits) and the *Bavidje* or *Bankambo* (ancestors). Such divinities, unlike the more distant Supreme God, are understood to be entirely interwoven within the social fabric of the community of the living, given their position within the “cycle of life.” With members of the living presenting both past and future ancestors (considered divinities with creative potential), an enhanced appreciation of the ontological reality of *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being, created alike his Creator becomes possible.

Again, it is helpful to revisit Tempels’ writing; beyond his expression of a fundamental harmony between the Luba and the Judeo-Christian concept of a continual bond between creature and Creator, he also drew attention to an important distinction; “We do not,” he

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<sup>109</sup> Attesting to this, a plethora of praise names for a Supreme God exist in Kiluba: *Kafula Moba*, *Vidye*, *Shakapanga*, *Kalumba Kamaweji*, *Nkungwa Banze*, and *Kamana* amongst others. Another common praise name, *Leza*, introduced by missionaries to differentiate the Christian God from the “lesser” local gods, is now also used fluidly across multiple contexts within both “traditional” and Christian churches of the many denominations densely populating the streets of Kamina.

<sup>110</sup> As noted before, the diverse vocabulary used to express this “entourage” left the precise constituency of this “entourage” unclear.

wrote “conceive of any equivalent relationship between creatures” (Tempels 1959, p. 28). In Western thought, created beings are denoted as substances existing independently of each other, an independence which, he argued, was entirely foreign to Bantu thought. Instead, as we heard him observe earlier “Bantu hold that created beings preserve a bond one with another, an intimate ontological relationship, comparable with the causal tie which binds creature and Creator” (Tempels 1959, p. 28). It was such a connection that led Tempels to the metaphor of a “spider’s web” to articulate the immense connectivities that operate within a “world of forces” (Tempels 1959, p. 29). It is, however, the agency of the *Muntu* (human being) as a “causal force of life” with the capacity to affect the life of surrounding forces (whether animal, vegetable or mineral) which I draw attention to here. Indeed, the creative potential of the other divinities present within the alternative creation narrative, who through the combination of clay, water and fire were able to fashion the human being, is perhaps also suggestive of the animate powers within all created beings and things (*bantu ne bintu ya Vidje*).

In light of this, I suggest that in the same way that *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being, can represent more than a moral ideal, so too can expressions of *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony with our fellow human beings and the ability to live in harmony within society (or within a specific social and cultural milieu). Although not as overtly present in responses to direct questions on the meaning of *Búmùntù*, the notion that *Búmùntù* expresses a more fundamental ontological *relational reality* was more subtly woven throughout our dialogues. If a *Muntu* (human being) is a “causal force of life” then their behaviour, even their thoughts, and certainly their adherence to culture, customs and/or societal expectations can have a very real impact on the health, happiness, success of others within the family, community and society at large. This seems immensely significant for the understanding of peace associated with *Búmùntù*, as it emphasizes that for many individuals and communities, to varying degrees, the statement “*Kwikala I (Kwikala biya ne) Bantu*” (“to be” is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings) not only represents a moral ideal but an *interconnectedness*, whereby the struggle to live in harmony with our fellow human beings is also the struggle to live according to the will of a Supreme God, mediated through a complex network of lesser divinities, in a world where the forces of all living beings, whether human, animal, vegetable and inanimate are inextricably connected (Tempels 1959, p. 29).

As just one instance of this, whilst an initiation ritual from one perspective may not seem directly relevant to the struggle for peace, from another perspective it may be enormously relevant in ensuring the ontological equilibrium upon which peace depends. In the pages to come, expressions of *Búmùntù* as both a moral ideal and a more foundational ontological relational reality will become more pronounced.

### *“TO BE” IS TO BE IN HARMONY WITH*

This chapter has now explored the term *Búmùntù*, more specifically drawing attention to the place and meaning of peace associated with it; numerous voices suggested a complex and multi-faceted concept. I have drawn attention to the presence of three major facets fluidly interwoven throughout our dialogues: *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being; *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony with our fellow human beings; and *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony within society (or within a specific social and cultural milieu). Despite divergences in the meanings attributed to *Búmùntù*, our dialogues did affirm the basic statement *Kwikala I (Kwikala biya ne) Bantu* (“to be” is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings) as essence; thus affirming the suggestion that peace, from this perspective, is a defining characteristic of our humanness. Our dialogues also shed light on how *Búmùntù* is used not only to condemn violence, but more broadly to promote peace calling individuals and communities to actively participate in the creation, maintenance and restoration of harmonious relationships.

In this way, for the most part, our dialogues have emphasized *Búmùntù* as a productive peace-enhancing and -maintaining concept with powerful potential in contributing to the struggle for peace. Nevertheless, throughout this chapter, intimations of a greater complexity have also been present. Evidences of the changing conceptions of *Búmùntù* suggest that we’re dealing with a contested concept occurring on an ontological landscape in transition. At the most basic level, this could be seen in the difference between expressions of *Búmùntù* as a moral ideal, expectation or recommendation or as a more fundamental ontological relational reality. As we move through the following chapters, evidences of this will become more obvious through more tangible everyday applications of *Búmùntù*.

Alongside the evidences of the evolving conception of *Búmùntù*, other intimations of a greater complexity associated with *Búmùntù* and its meaning for peace will emerge. The opening creation narrative, for example, pointing towards a rupture between first man and first woman and the resultant destruction of *Búmùntù*, may be suggestive of a potential for the oppressive applications of *Búmùntù* regarding gender relations. The expression of the loss of one's status as "human" because of "antisocial" behaviour may equally be suggestive of oppressive and dehumanizing applications for individuals in society that do not "fit in." In order to explore this, I now turn to *Chapter Eight* to move us beyond the more abstract articulations that characterize direct responses to the question of the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*, towards the many complexities and paradoxes associated with its application in the contemporary landscape.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: TO “BECOME” IS TO ENGAGE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

It is worth returning to the cosmogram introduced in the opening to *Part Three*, and the suggestion that the circle represents a reality that *Búmùntù* and the peace associated with it pertains not to a limitless space, but instead to a terrain which has its peripheries. Linked with my earlier discussion of borderlands and border thinking, a sense of peripheries arose primarily through an engagement with groups in society experiencing some degree of marginalization, exclusion and “Other-ing” in Kamina today; women, ethnic “Others” and those associated with “traditional” religious beliefs and practices. This chapter, then, turns towards an examination of *Búmùntù* as applied to such groups and more importantly, to the critique of such applications by individuals who are part of such groups. Before this, I need to enter more deeply into another aspect of the cosmogram, the intersecting horizontal and vertical line which was labelled as the “cross of life.” According to Mwamba (pers. conv., March, 2014),<sup>111</sup> the “cross of life” marks the existence of an alternative “extraordinary” field existing outside or beyond the “ordinary” social field in which *Búmùntù* is expected to reign and where even certain forms of violence can be justified. This renders the notion of peripheries very real in a literal sense; where what is acceptable “within” is different to what is acceptable “outside” or “beyond.” The presence of such a space is alluded to in the second encounter arising in this chapter, through a dialogue on the various forms of violence enacted during investiture rituals of the Luba royal line. It is later echoed through a dialogue on rituals performed by soldiers in the context of the Congo wars. Although, this chapter does not enter into the complex metaphysical realm that these rituals seem to operate within, the notion of an alternative “extraordinary” field does allude to the possibility of a violence existing “outside” or “beyond” where rather than being viewed as an antithesis to *Búmùntù*, it is viewed as necessary in maintaining the cosmological equilibrium required to attain the peace associated with *Búmùntù*. The notion of peripheries is then extended in a more metaphorical sense through an examination of *Búmùntù* applied to gender relations and ethnic relations. Although such relations and the violence pertaining to them occur very much in the ordinary social field within which *Búmùntù* is expected to reign, the notion of

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<sup>111</sup> A written account of this genesis narrative can also be found in Mwamba (2018).

peripheries is an appropriate metaphor in that it represents how different individuals (according to their diverse positionalities) may delineate what is acceptable “within” *Búmùntù* in different ways. Whilst violence may be seen as antithetical to *Búmùntù* from one perspective, the same violence may be viewed as necessary for maintaining a certain social order considered necessary to attain and maintain peace. Accordingly, here, one can witness how *Búmùntù* can be stretched, reconstructed, redefined and critiqued to both justify and condemn forms of violence, all as part of the struggle for peace

### ***A CULTURE WHICH DID NOT HONOUR, DID NOT GIVE VALUE, DID NOT GIVE WEIGHT TO HUMAN LIFE***

It was from this point (Mbidi Kiluwe) that the Baluba began to emerge. They were a warrior people. In ancient times, they would kill people seriously. Whenever the Chief wanted to do something, they would kill people. There were times even when the Chief would be seated and to stand up, he would place a spear on a person lying before him, spearing him as he stood up. There was a terrible violence, a culture which did not honour, did not give value, did not give weight to human life. So, it was necessary that people condemned this, to stop this behaviour, this culture of killing. It was necessary to stop this because the people were unhappy. They did not want this violence. It is here that *Búmùntù* intervened and played a big role. *Búmùntù* demanded people to be helpful towards each other, to be pleasant towards each other, to be on good terms with everyone within the community. And then, with the presence of religion this *Búmùntù* grew, and took value, and bloomed (Flory Sendwe, dialogue #27, September, 2015).

The above articulation of the origins of *Búmùntù* arose during a dialogue with Flory Sendwe, a local public servant with a keen interest in Luba history (dialogue #27, September, 2015). Like our first introduction to Mbidi Kiluwe, the most revered ancestor of the Luba, Flory Sendwe’s account began with the more familiar Luba genesis epic: the overthrow of Nkongolo Mwamba’s violent leadership by the more intelligent and refined Mbidi Kiluwe and his son Kalala Ilunga, who implemented the new political system of the “*Bulopwe*,” the sacral model of Kingship. As I welcomed you in Kamina, this famous Luba genesis epic led to the

assertion of *Kinkunki* as a place of peace and the unifying position of the *Mulopwe* (King) considered a “father to all;” Flory Sendwe, however, offers another account, emphasising the “terrible violence” of this ancient political structure, specifically through practices of human sacrifice. In my extended dialogue with him, rather than *Búmùntù* being described as a tradition emanating from a sacral model of Kingship, it is instead presented as a grassroots phenomenon, at once as the natural state of “our ancestors, who were truly social, who wanted to live collectively, in community” and as a form of contest against an “exaggeration of violence” by the Luba political structure. In this account, the arrival of religion (clarified as a reference to Christianity) is also identified as a powerful force which contributed to the further development of *Búmùntù*.

The theme of a “terrible violence” is striking; during my initial field trip I was advised by one individual to not let my emphasis on peace silence the reality of violence associated with the Luba “tradition.” Of course, like my argument regarding dominant narratives on humanness, violence and peace from the international perspective, one cannot enter into the theme of a “terrible violence” without unpacking and challenging the ongoing influence of the aforementioned *enduring struggle*, which has also had a profound influence on local perspectives. The need for this was most obvious in everyday interactions and instances outside of more “official” dialogues, for example: in a group of students account of a harsh precolonial existence directly followed by a violent but also necessarily civilizing colonization; in a neighbour’s portrayal of his Luba ancestors as lost in “evil” practices of fetishism and witchcraft, not yet saved by the good news of Christ; or in the advice I was given to avoid meeting with a diviner because “you know that is the work of the devil.” Nevertheless, whilst recognizing the persistence of colonial narratives of “savagery” and “barbarity” at the local level as well, this is not to negate the reality of such violence, potential or otherwise. Indeed, as noted earlier, the Luba have been known to be a warrior people whose vast empire was no exception from the violent conquests associated with and characteristic of most historical empires. What is more intriguing in unpacking and challenging those more unequivocal assertions of “terrible violence” is the intersection of such forms of violence with the value of peace, expressed through *Búmùntù*.

Exploring this further, I return to our dialogue with the Notables at the Luba Royal Court in *Kinkunki*; unlike Flory Sendwe, who positioned *Búmùntù* as a contest to the “exaggeration of violence” by the Luba political structure, this dialogue reveals the concurrent presence of the centrality of *Búmùntù* in that political structure as well as the reality of violence emanating from it.

### ***YOU ARE BORN FROM A WOMAN, NOW YOU HAVE TO BE BORN AGAIN***

*Muntu I Kipangwa kya Vidyè” (a human being is a divine creature), and in this sense reflects, to a greater or lesser degree, its creator ‘Shakapanga’ (Father of Creation or God).*

*(Notables of the Luba Royal Court, dialogue #8, June, 2014)*

The above expression of *Búmùntù* is a familiar one; returning to the refined living room in the principal residence of *Kinkunki*, it arises during a dialogue on *Búmùntù* with the same group of Notables who welcomed us there. Like most dialogues, this one also began with the meaning of *Búmùntù*, but given the location, this soon expressed itself through a dialogue on the qualities that mark a *Mulopwe* (King): *Muntu wa bine* (a person of truthfulness or integrity), *Muntu wa Kanema* (a person with respect), *Muntu wa nsungu* (a person who does not anger), *Muntu wa kilelo* (a person who cares and nurtures others), *Muntu kusangalela bantu* (a person who takes joy in being social), *Muntu kulokweta bantu* (a person who intercedes on behalf of someone, who advocates for others). Translating this to practice, I was told that to recognize the future *Mulopwe* (King) amongst the King’s descendants, one must always observe the “*bilongwa*” (behaviour) of those descendants. Through such observation one can discover the qualities of the King: the one who is not selfish at the table when sharing food, who is reserved and pays attention to the needs of others, who, when playing, does not provoke the others, does not beat the others, who is truthful and careful when passing on messages, who cares for and welcomes others.

It is easy to discern that these qualities are also those which mark *Búmùntù*, an association which was affirmed during our dialogues. Hence, the Notables in *Kinkunki* associated the

centrality of *Búmùntù* with the role and function of the *Mulopwe* (King) and the Luba political structure more broadly. This centrality, however, does not negate the reality of violence; indeed, when the Notables described the construction of the principal residence in *Kinkunki* by the Belgian colonial government in 1948 as part of their strategy to move the *Grand Chef Kasongo Wa Nyembo* from his original location at Samba, the reasoning offered was the colonial government's concern over the high incidences of human sacrifice that ostensibly accompanied this powerful King. The theme of human sacrifice returned when our dialogue moved towards the investiture rituals of a *Mulopwe* (King); according to the Notables, such rituals indeed involved considerable violence. Whilst some practices, such as those involving human sacrifice, have since been prohibited by the modern state, there are other investiture practices which — I am told — continue still today. The role of royal incest was raised as one such practice; although it was not clear whether the group viewed such a practice as a form of violence, my reasoning for including it here is that incest is considered entirely taboo in the ordinary social field within which *Búmùntù* is expected to reign. The role of royal incest for the investiture of a *Mulopwe* (King) is, therefore, suggestive of the possibility of an alternative “extraordinary” field existing “outside” or “beyond” *Búmùntù*.

You are born from a woman, now when you are becoming a *Mulopwe*, you are becoming a new creature, you have to be born again, to be born again you have to pass through the body of your sister, so she gives birth to you, that is why you have to sleep with her, that's the foundation of royal incest. (Notables of the Luba Royal Court, dialogue #8, June, 2014)

Such a ritual is seen to enable the rebirth of a “new creature,” however, given the above expression of the qualities expected of a *Mulopwe*, it is clear that such an investiture ritual does not represent a permanent exemption from *Búmùntù*. As Mpiana writes (cited in Nkulu N'Sengha (2002, p. 431), this breaking of a taboo so central to the Luba notion of civility occurs temporarily and only once, directly before the investiture. According to this perspective, it was intended to teach the King that “he must die to his family” so that he could become a “father to all” (cited in Nkulu N'Sengha (2002, p. 431). Another account from de Heusch (1982, p. 26), however, is more aligned with the notion of *peripheries* introduced in the opening of this chapter; de Heusch suggests that the body of the King is encompassed by two poles, a negative, “linked to the memory of beginning and incestuous unions” (de

Heusch 1982, p. 26) and a positive, associated with social order and human survival. According to this account, the royal ritual occurs “outside” the inhabited space, on the “margins of the society,” in “*Kobo Ka Malwa*” (the house of unhappiness). Unfortunately, our dialogue in *Kinkunki* did not enter into the complex realm within which this ritual act takes place, but the Notables did highlight that it is a temporary departure from the ordinary social field for a specific time-limited purpose. Reflecting on this in light of Mwamba’s cosmogram, it would seem that this temporary departure enables the power which is required to maintain the order of the “ordinary” social field and thus *Búmùntù* as well. Interestingly, it is not only the *Mulopwe* (King) who is reborn from this act of royal incest; during the night, the female relative involved in the act is said to drink the semen of the soon to be *Mulopwe* (King). In doing so, she is also reborn as the *Mwanana*, who herself becomes a King possessing her own lands and her own subjects. Whilst contact between the *Mulopwe* (King) and the *Mwanana* is from this point prohibited, her role is also considered central in holding the power of the *Mulopwe* (King).

Once again, it is crucial to point out that whilst incest is understood to be entirely taboo, the extent to which this act of royal incest is perceived as a form of violence was not addressed. The implications of such practices in our consideration of the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù* were not elucidated during our dialogue. Nevertheless, the possibility of an alternative “extraordinary” field existing outside or beyond *Búmùntù* elucidated through this example will become particularly pertinent later in the course of a dialogue on rituals performed by soldiers in the context of the Congo wars, leading to a rethinking of the statement: “There is no violence within *Búmùntù*. But outside there is violence” (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015). Whilst in the former chapter this was taken as an expression of violence as an antithesis to *Búmùntù*, the above reference to rituals is suggestive of a different kind of “outside” which may be perceived as complementing, rather than contesting *Búmùntù*.

## ***BÚMUNTÙ: TO SUBMIT, TO OBEY, TO BE HUMBLE AND TO ENDURE***

*Búmuntù is part of a certain initiation, with our grandparents “Butanda.” And during this initiation they inculcated women with the idea that she is inferior to men, that she must submit to men, that she can claim nothing. Even if she is beaten 300 times, she must endure. And it has been like that for years and years and years.*

*(Véronique Kilumba Nkulu, dialogue #26, August, 2015)*

I now turn to a dialogue with three women, Véronique Kilumba Nkulu, Jeannette Kabwika Mitonga and Ruth Mwange, all directors of local women’s organizations from *Synergie des Organisations, Initiatives et Associations Féminines (S.O.I.A.F.)*. Our dialogue had been organized specifically to expand on a theme raised in the earlier robust discussion with a group of professors and teaching assistants from the three local universities and community leaders from local NGOs. Part of this dialogue is captured in the preceding chapter in “*on essence and beyond*” but another theme which arose is still to be discussed: *Búmuntù* and its application to gender relations and gender-based violence. During that dialogue, the argument arose that although violence in general is perceived as being antithetical to *Búmuntù*, violence against women is treated differently. According to this argument, such violence was viewed as “normal” in Luba society until the modern period, the concept of gender-based violence therefore did not exist within “tradition.” Evidently, in light of expressions of *Búmuntù* which emphasize adherence to culture, customs and/or societal expectations, this “normalization” has significant implications for our understanding of the concept; yet, during that dialogue, Mme. Véronique appeared as a lone female voice arguing that Luba women have always known violence; that their suffering is, and always has been, testament to this, even if there have been few opportunities for this suffering to be voiced and heard. Her argument raises an important point: who is given voice and who is silenced can have an enormous influence on conceptions and realisations of *Búmuntù*.

Having become conscious of this dilemma and the dominance of the male voice during my preliminary field trip, I was determined to shift the balance. To explore *Búmuntù* and its application to gender relations and gender-based violence further, Mme. Véronique kindly

invited two of her colleagues to come and meet with me. The above expression that “*Búmùntù* is part of a certain initiation;” like the preceding encounter, is a powerful assertion once again asking us to rethink the statement that “there is no violence within *Búmùntù*, but outside there is violence” (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015). This time, however, it is suggestive of a violence which can be seen as part of, aligned with or even “within”<sup>112</sup> *Búmùntù*. Hence, Mme. Véronique’s reminder of the struggle for women to have their suffering voiced and heard points towards the presence of contestation. Before exploring this further through my dialogue with Véronique Kilumba Nkulu, Jeannette Kabwika Mitonga and Ruth Mwange, I first offer two seemingly contradictory expressions regarding *Búmùntù* and gender identified in earlier dialogues and which I carried along into the current dialogue.

First, aligned with expressions of *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony within society (or within a specific social and cultural milieu) and thus the emphasis on adherence to culture, customs and/or societal expectations; is the idea that *Búmùntù* is inextricably bound up in the gendered roles and functions of individuals in a specific social structure.

There are things that the woman must reflect in front of *Búmùntù*, there are things that the man must reflect in front of *Búmùntù*. These are not necessarily identical between man and woman (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015).

Second, and aligned with expressions of *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being by way of its creation, there is the idea that *Búmùntù* transcends gender. This was heard in one of the earlier articulations of *Búmùntù* from Prof. Phînéés Yumba Musoya (dialogue #52, October, 2015) when he noted the sacred character of each *Muntu* “without distinction of sex.” This is echoed, in an assertion from the Notables of the Luba Royal Court (dialogue #50, October, 2015) that; “Men and women, we all have the *Búmùntù*. It is the same *Búmùntù* that we all have.”

As my awareness of highly gendered understandings of *Búmùntù* as well as those

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<sup>112</sup> By acknowledging the suggestion of a violence “within,” I do not intend to affirm a violence inherent in *Búmùntù* itself. Instead, it is my view that some expressions in Kamina today which seem to equate “our *Búmùntù*” with “our culture” do, by consequence, align *Búmùntù* with various forms of violence. As has already been heard, other voices contest this with the argument that *Búmùntù* transcends culture.

transcending gender developed, my questions started to shift. During my second field trip, my earlier more generic question about the meaning of the term *Búmùntù* gradually included more specific references about the qualities possessed by a man exemplifying *Búmùntù* and those possessed by a woman doing so, expanding the exploration of “authentic Personhood” to an exploration of “authentic manhood” and “authentic womanhood.” Interestingly, many qualities said to be possessed by a man exemplifying *Búmùntù* were generic and equally applicable to women.<sup>113</sup> However, certain qualities were more specific to women; most notably were themes of obedience, submission and/or humility towards her husband and/or to her male counterparts. Additionally, although *kwishipeja* (humility) and *bunvu* (shame/modesty) were also identified as qualities expected of a man, they were emphasized more in relation to women. Applied to women, however, they were often communicated referring to very specific behaviours/practices, once again associated with the temporal — “in the time of our ancestors” — and the spatial — “in the villages.”<sup>114</sup>

These themes of obedience, submission and/or humility reflect one narrative, encountered often during our dialogues in Kamina, asserting the “lower status” of women according to the Luba “tradition.” Expressed as a criticism, I was told by numerous individuals that women were (and to varying degrees still are) considered “inferior” and treated as *kintu* (objects) rather than *mntu* (human beings).<sup>115</sup> Although the “lower status” of women was adamantly presented by many individuals as being “our culture,” “our way,” or the way of “our ancestors,” the repeated references to the biblical genesis account of Eve’s creation from the rib of Adam as his “helper”<sup>116</sup> as a justification of this “traditional” perspective was indicative of exogenous influences being at work as well. Other individuals directly opposed such

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<sup>113</sup> Such qualities (or virtues), centered on the “*savoir vivre avec les autres*” (*knowhow to live with others*), have been mentioned in the previous chapter.

<sup>114</sup> For example, I was told that *kwishipeja* (humility) can be expressed in how a woman carries her body in the presence of a man. In the past, a woman was required to kneel to offer her husband a glass of water and remain kneeling until he finished drinking. Similarly, when passing her husband or another man, she was required to bow slightly as a gesture of humility and submission and to not do so would have been understood as profound disrespect. Similarly, *bunvu* (shame/modesty) was expressed in the way a woman dresses. In the past, a woman was expected to wear two *pagnes* (a type of cloth wrapped as a skirt). Whilst it is common to wear only one today, the continued expectation to cover the thighs and legs means that wearing a mini skirt or pants can still scandalize and disrupt the harmony of the community, especially in the villages.

<sup>115</sup> Note that this expression, in itself, may be taken as evidence for the way *Búmùntù* is used to assert the sacred and inviolable dignity of the *mntu* (human being); they are appealing to the immense injustice of the treatment of a woman as if she is not a human being.

<sup>116</sup> Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Genesis 2:22 “Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man”

representations of “our culture” arguing that whilst the highly gendered roles and functions associated with *Búmùntù* are characteristic of the Luba “tradition,” the notion of “inferiority” expressed today is a gross misrepresentation of both *Búmùntù* and the Luba “tradition” itself. In the pages that follow, I expand on the many indicators that the positioning of women within the Luba “tradition” is far more complex and nuanced than it is often presented in Kamina today. For now, I return to the dialogue with Véronique Kilumba Nkulu, Jeannette Kabwika Mitonga and Ruth Mwangi to further explore the suggestion of a violence that is seen as part of, aligned with or even “within” *Búmùntù* – alongside its contestation.

Like most, our dialogue began with a broader question on the meaning attributed to the term *Búmùntù*. Their responses, provided an appropriate lead into my ultimate curiosity. Whilst Jeannette Kabwika Mitonga emphasized *Búmùntù* as “humanism in his/her way of living,” Ruth Mwangi emphasized *Búmùntù* as “someone who maintains customs” (*dialogue #26, August, 2015*).<sup>117</sup> These responses, alongside Mme. Véronique’s earlier critique of Luba “tradition” and its silencing of Luba women’s suffering, provided me with the opportunity to ask them directly about these seemingly contradictory expressions of *Búmùntù*. The immediate response from Mme. Véronique was that “*Búmùntù* is part of a certain initiation” is a powerful expression of a close association between *Búmùntù* and the silencing of Luba women’s suffering. In order to provide a more tangible example of this, Mme. Véronique offered the story of one of her clients.

Chantelle (not real name), had endured regular episodes of violence throughout her marriage. She understood this to be her duty to bear as a woman. One day, however, her husband (under the influence of alcohol) came home with a group of his friends and attempted to disrobe her publicly and display her genitals. This was the threshold for Chantelle who could no longer endure the abuse. She decided to leave him. However, in line with the disapproval of divorce in Luba society (particularly if it is instigated by the wife) meant that her act of courage led to the condemnation by her community who began hurling the question “*Búmùntù ubaende kwayi?*” (Where has your *Búmùntù* gone?)<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Their full responses are recorded in *Appendix G: Three Key Facets of Búmùntù*.

<sup>118</sup> This is a summary from a much longer account offered by Véronique Kilumba Nkulu, (*dialogue #26, August, 2015*). I have written this up in a case example format for readability.

In Chantelle's story, one finds evidence of the earlier criticism of *Ubuntu*, that due to its emphasis on social harmony it can be used to foster conformity and conservatism and stifle dissent. According to Mme. Véronique and her colleagues, this is particularly so when it comes to its application to women – in this case, stifling the dissent of a wife in the face of her husband's abuse. Hence, our dialogue expanded onto two aspects of Chantelle's story which are suggestive of the implications of some highly gendered applications of *Búmùntù* for the struggle against gender-based violence. First, one finds a belief that various forms of violence against women are an acceptable practice in Luba society (as men's "physical discipline" of women) and thus can be argued to be "within" *Búmùntù*. As in others, in this dialogue this was communicated through reference to a well-known proverb whose popular interpretation advises that an astute man will regularly "shake" his wife a little to keep her on the right path. Second, one finds a belief that a good Luba wife, one who exemplifies *Búmùntù*, is one who submits to and obeys her husband, including in the event of him mistreating her. Expanding on this, there is a view that a good Luba wife should remain silent about such mistreatment in order to protect her husband's reputation and to maintain the sacrosanct institution of the family.

These two beliefs were reflected in other dialogues with individuals and communities also; however, in the context of the current dialogue another more striking feature of Chantelle's story was drawn attention to by Mme. Véronique and her colleagues. Although there are clearly multiple perspectives in Luba society today regarding the extent to which certain forms of gender-based violence can be considered part of, aligned to or "within" Luba culture, and by extension *Búmùntù* also, there is no such debate regarding the particular form of violence referred to in Chantelle's story. To publicly disrobe a woman and expose her genitals, much like the example of incest offered in the preceding encounter, is expressed as being scandalous in Luba society and entirely contrary to *Búmùntù* by all accounts. "Why," Mme. Véronique asked during our dialogue, "did the community not rally around Chantelle, hurling the question "*Búmùntù ubaende kwayi?*" (Where has your *Búmùntù* gone?) to her husband?" The reason offered was that ultimately women are subjected to greater scrutiny regarding their behaviour. This returns us to the earlier point: who is given voice and who is silenced can have an enormous influence on conceptions of *Búmùntù*. We might also

observe that the question of who is given voice and who is silenced impacts on who can call others into its application or turn a blind eye to any contradiction in its applications.

Although such questions were not asked directly, as the three women reflected further on the gender bias in applications of *Búmùntù*, responses to such questions came about. This was heard, for example, through the statement from Mme Jeannette (dialogue #26, August, 2015): “it is this that has destroyed *Búmùntù*, the arrogance of men, who have even created proverbs in order to denigrate women, to put women in an inferior position. Mme Véronique (dialogue #26, August, 2015), expressed a similar point: “*Búmùntù* is being damaged in this way, by the law that men impose on those considered inferior, a place that women occupy in our society.” Interestingly, the meaning attributed to the term *Búmùntù* appears to have shifted; whilst earlier in our dialogue *Búmùntù* was presented as being “part of” *Butanda*, an initiation that has inculcated inferiority in women, here, the assertion that *Búmùntù* has been “destroyed” and “damaged” appears to be referring to a different *Búmùntù*. Instead, they seem to allude to a more time immemorial concept of *Búmùntù* which has been corrupted by the patriarchal applications described earlier. Drawing from the three key facets of *Búmùntù* described in the preceding chapter, one might say that *Búmùntù* being part of *Butanda* is aligned to expressions of *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony within society (or within a specific social and cultural milieu); whilst the articulation of its destruction is more aligned to the meaning of *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity in all human beings. It is significant that in the course of one dialogue, it is possible to fluidly shift between varying meanings and expressions of *Búmùntù*. This was just one instance in our dialogues which demonstrates how *Búmùntù* could be used to justify violence and then be used again to contest that same violence, even in the course of one dialogue. Given the shifting meanings in this dialogue, I was interested to know if *Búmùntù* is also used to contest the “inferior” positioning of women? Whether it is also applied by women to emphasize their value as human beings equal in human dignity and worth? Or do the negative applications outweigh its potential benefits for women?

The women’s responses were less about current applications of *Búmùntù* and more about future applications. The need to elevate such conceptions of *Búmùntù* that valorise women as human beings equal in human dignity and worth was viewed as vital, especially in light of a

common resistance to their work on gender equality and gender-based violence that “this idea of parity that you are bringing, it is not our culture, it is not our way, it is foreign.” The acknowledgement of the need to counter a common narrative on “our culture” — and thus too on *Búmùntù* — in order to bring about change, lead to a reflection on the aspects of Luba culture which elevate women’s status in society. The immense value given to women in their roles as mothers and wives was described; this value, I was told, is such that it is the woman who is seen as carrying the benediction of the household. Accordingly, for a man to mistreat or leave unresolved a problem with his wife is to bring misfortune in all his endeavours. Although, I was keen to explore a parallel between this articulation and existing literature on the centrality of women in the history of the Luba Empire (Nooter Roberts 2013) - these three women expressed a lack of specific knowledge on the role of women in such political practices and so, unfortunately, our reflection was cut short. I will resume this reflection in the following encounter. For now, however, it is worth noting that such a cutting short was not uncommon during our dialogues in Kamina – when I attempted to draw attention to existing literature as a contest to the more rigid and categoric portrayal of women as “inferior” according to the Luba “tradition.” Such a “forgetting,” I suggest (evidenced in the lack of knowledge of such aspects of Luba history), is yet another indication for the need to unpack the ongoing influence of that *enduring struggle*, this time on contemporary gender relations.

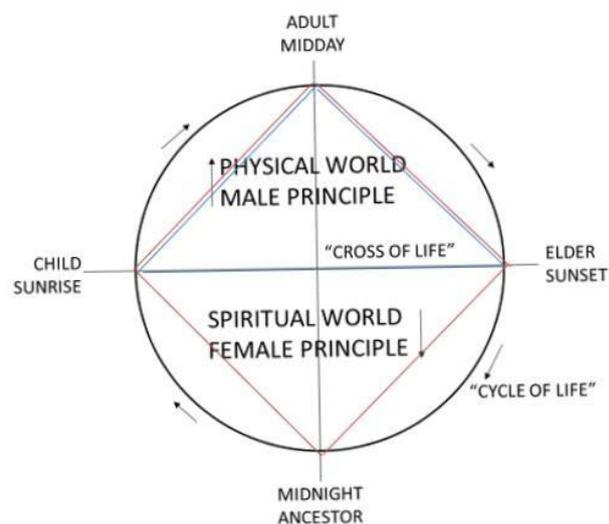
### ***MEN ARE CHIEFS IN THE DAYTIME, BUT WOMEN BECOME CHIEFS AT NIGHT***

*Men are chiefs in the daytime, but women become chiefs at night*

*Luba proverb*

In the alternative genesis account with which this chapter started, there was a curious moment of tension between first man and first woman, where she was recorded as saying “It is you who have woken to find me here already. Who is more of a stranger than the other?” Continuing the narrative, it was said that God divided the first intersex human being into two, thus dividing the power: “There were now two Kingdoms. The Kingdom of Man and the

Kingdom of Woman. The Power of Man and the Power of Woman. This meant that in order to accomplish the will of God, the man and the woman needed to be united” (*Bulopwe Bwamulao Wa Bana Banshi*, dialogue #43, September, 2015). The theme of a masculine and a feminine power is significant, echoing an aspect of Mwamba’s cosmogram that I have not as yet explicated: the presence of a triangular formation representing the male principle (marked in blue) and a lozenge (or diamond) formation representing the female principle (marked in red) (Mwamba, pers. conv., March, 2014). Continuing our exploration of *Búmùntù* and its application to gender relations and gender-based violence commenced in the preceding encounter, I return to this cosmogram and the notion of a male and female principle.



According to Mwamba (pers. conv., March, 2014), whilst the male principle (represented by the triangular formation) is located above the horizontal axis in the realm of the living community and of daylight; the female principle (represented by the lozenge (or diamond) formation) traverses the horizontal axis, thus establishing the connection between the realms of the living community/day and of the ancestors/night. This is suggestive of women’s vital role in maintaining the cosmological equilibrium on which the “cycle of life” depends and of the specific feminine power associated with the ancestral realm. This theme continually, albeit often subtly, reappeared throughout our dialogues, regularly interfering with the dominant narrative of women’s “lower status” and their being traditionally viewed as

“naturally inferior,” thus alluding to the fact that the positioning of women in “our culture,” “our way,” or the way of “our ancestors” may not be as rigid and categorical as it is often presented. I would like to explore the tension between these two competing representations of the status of women in Luba society, considering its implications for *Búmùntù* and its application to gender relations and gender-based violence.

To explore the tension between the two competing narratives, I return to the terms ‘*Eyo Vidje*’ (the male response) and ‘*Eyo Mwa*’ (the female response) earlier introduced as the expected responses to the welcoming greeting of “*Wako wako wako*,”<sup>119</sup> responses earlier translated as “yes, my God” or “yes, divine one.” During our dialogues in Kamina, however, I found that whilst there was a general consensus on the meaning of the male response,<sup>120</sup> this was not the case for the female response. Unlike the term *Vidje* (directly translated as God, or when used in the plural *bavidje* as ancestors) the term *Mwa* was more complex. At the time of my preliminary field trip, Prof. Mbuya Mukombo, a linguistics professor at the University of Lubumbashi, explained to me that *Mwa* is a reference to *Mwadi*, an important female personage in the history of the Luba Empire, through whose body the spirit of a deceased King would be reincarnated (dialogue #19, July, 2014). Much like the *Mwanana* from the earlier account of royal incest, this important female personage had a vital role in carrying the power of the *Mulopwe*. In this role, she too would become a divinely ordained King and have her own land and subjects. Prof. Mbuya Mukombo suggests that this is why the significance of the male response of “*Eyo Vidje*” and the female response of “*Eyo Mwa*” is the same, a recognition of the divinity within the other human being (dialogue #19, July, 2014).

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<sup>119</sup> During my second field trip, when I began to actively explore gendered applications of *Búmùntù*, I started asking individuals and communities the meaning of the responses of “*Eyo Mwa*” and “*Eyo Vidje*” as an opening question to our dialogues. Although I had already been given a credible translation, I was interested in using this question as a strategic opening in order to place *Búmùntù* at the center. I did not anticipate that the lack of consensus on the meaning of the female response would, in turn, offer further insight into the tension between highly gendered applications of *Búmùntù* and applications which transcend gender.

<sup>120</sup> The striking consensus was that with such a response, one is recognizing the divine in the other. A less common interpretation inverted this meaning so that “*Eyo Vidje*” was a reference to the God in the self “I, (as a creature of God), accept your greeting.” The emphasis in such an articulation was on the status of the speaker as a man “I attribute this title to myself as a man, I attribute to myself this title of Lord” (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015).

On the significance of the figure of the *Mwadi*, a more comprehensive examination is found in Nooter Roberts (2013) exploration of the centrality of women in Luba political practices and the ontological relationships amongst power, gender and spirituality; she notes: “at the onset of colonialism in the early 1900s there were at least four *Mwadi*’s governing their respective principalities and wielding greater authority than their male counterparts” (Nooter Roberts 2013, p. 78). Nooter Roberts (2013) presents an image of the last *Mwadi* spirit medium taken by Thomas Reeve in the mid-1970s; this *Mwadi*, understood to be the living embodiment of King Kasongo Wa Niembo who died in 1931, passed away herself in the mid-1980s. She is just one testament to a broader argument by Nooter Roberts (2013, p. 68) that “while men ruled in overt terms, women constituted the covert side of sacred authority and played critical roles in alliance-building, decision-making, succession disputes, and investiture rites.” Resembling the articulation of the female principle in the above cosmogram, said to traverse the horizontal axis and establishing connection between the realm of the living community and the realm of the ancestors, Nooter Roberts (2013, p. 68) also writes that women “figured centrally in attracting and securing the spiritual allegiance necessary for a state built on the strength of tutelary spirits called *bavidye*.”

Returning to our own dialogues in Kamina today, little evidence of a continued memory of this important historical female figure emerged; for the most part, the question on the significance of the female response *Eyo Mwa* resulted in a more generalized explication that it is a response which denotes respect. When prompted on the specific significance of *Mwa*, numerous individuals did identify the term *Mwadi* or *Mwandi*, but even then little consensus on the meaning of this term occurred. I was told by different informants that it related to the first wife of the *Mulopwe*, the first wife of an ordinary chief, the second wife of an ordinary chief, or more broadly, “a well-loved woman.” Amongst the responses, a more striking difference in signification also appeared. On a number of occasions, the response of “Eyo Mwa” was understood to signify women’s lower status; for example “that the woman is underneath the man and must obey his orders...it signifies that a woman has nothing else to say apart from what her husband has said” (The Notables at the Luba , dialogue #50, October, 2015); or “one lowers oneself to say that one is weak....when you say Eyo Mwandi this is to say, by comparison to the lord, I am inferior” (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45,

October, 2015).

The strange divergence of responses seems significant; after all, this is a response not just to the welcome greeting of *Wako wako wako*, but also to any other greeting encountered innumerable times each day as an individual crosses paths with another. On the one hand, the female response *Eyo Mwa*, through its reference to a powerful and divine historical female figure, is said to mirror the male response *Eyo Vidje* in its recognition of the divinity of the other (irrespective of gender); on the other hand, echoing the dominant narrative of the “lower status” of women who are “naturally inferior,” it is said to be an expression of a woman’s obedience, submission and/or humility towards her male counterparts. It is important to consider the implications of this tension for *Búmùntù* and its application to gender relations and gender-based violence. For example, it is likely that the more rigid and categorical representations of women as “naturally inferior” result in a more exclusive emphasis on the highly gendered notions of *Búmùntù* (in turn, potentially silencing those conceptions of *Búmùntù* that elevate women’s status;) whilst beliefs in a feminine power associated with the ancestral realm may allow more space for those notions of *Búmùntù* as transcending gender. This has implications for the earlier assertion of a need to counter dominant narratives on “our culture” and to elevate conceptions of *Búmùntù* that valorise women as human beings equal in human dignity and worth.

Still, whilst the above explorations suggest that the belief in a feminine power can act as a powerful contest to those more rigid and categoric representations of women as “naturally inferior,” it is important to consider another angle also. This was alluded to in the earlier dialogue with the group of leaders from the *Bulopwe Bwamulao Wa Bana Banshi*, (dialogue #43, September, 2015). In their genesis account, we were told that the angels saw their opportunity to seize power through the woman “who was weak to their influence because, like them, she had been formed through the Word of God also.” Indeed, not dissimilar to the biblical narrative of original sin, it was the woman’s corruption by the angels which brought about the destruction of *Búmùntù*. Importantly, however, it was not the women’s knowledge of the “secrets of the world,” “the art of fetishism and sorcery and how to navigate the world in spirit” that was seen to occasion this destruction. It was, instead, the fact that she did not transmit this knowledge to the man, that she didn’t tell him how he can live well, how he can

work, how he can govern this world, in turn leading to the division of the *Kingdom of Man* and the *Kingdom of Woman*. Shifting the conversation away from origins to the present moment, the religious leaders confirm their belief that this genesis story provides a real account extending into the present moment. They believe that through their different process of creation, women “must have a power which differs from the power of men.” Similarly, the refusal of women to transmit this knowledge also extends into the present moment and is heard through an intriguing statement about the causes of the uneven development seen in the world today: “But amongst the whites, women have the capacity to show how one must develop, how it is necessary to search for the good... but here amongst us, women they reserve it, they know it, but they hide it” (*Bulopwe Bwamulao Wa Bana Banshi*, dialogue #43, September, 2015). The inference that Luba (or Congolese) women’s failure to share their “secrets of the world” has resulted in the underdevelopment of the Luba (or Congolese) terrain is a unique inference only encountered within this dialogue. It does however allude to the possibility that a belief in the power of women to carry the benediction of her family/her household/her community could leave women vulnerable to forms of scapegoating; and also, how the *Búmùntù* of a woman (more so than that of her male counterpart) may become associated with the success or failure of her family, community and/or society at large.

### ***WE ARE A WARRIOR PEOPLE, BUT NOT A VIOLENT PEOPLE***

There is a knock on a calabash bowl; I did not hear it nor did I hear the voice of the visitor but I was told by local diviner Ilunga Shimbi (dialogue #18, July 2014) that it was one of the *Bavidje* (ancestors) who regularly communicates with him. The calabash bowl is one of his tools of divination offering a channel of communication between the realms of the living and of the ancestors. This interruption from the ancestral realm took place during a dialogue in the Methodist Guest House communal lounge room; Ilunga Shimbi had been invited to talk to me about his practice of divination. After an initial presentation of his tools of divination and a description of his practice, I discovered that he had been actively involved as a diviner with soldiers of the national army during the Congo wars. So, our dialogue ventured down

another track, also influenced by the surprise arrival of Longwa Banza Gary, who joined the conversation. In an earlier dialogue, he had asserted that “we are a warrior people, but not a violent people” (Longwa Banza Gary, dialogue #4, June-July, 2014). In doing so, he had broached the history of violent conflict amongst the Luba. In the company of Ilunga Shimba, we were together able to expand upon this theme. Here, I focus on those aspects of the dialogue offering yet another nuance to our understanding of the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*, expanding more specifically on the earlier suggestion of a violence existing “outside” or “beyond” *Búmùntù*.

In this dialogue, we again hear the statement that “a Luba is a warrior people, a combatant, a people who have no fear, but a people who know how to live with others” (Longwa Banza Gary, dialogue #18, July, 2014). As can be seen, this statement echoes and expands slightly on the initial assertion. Here, the valorisation of social harmony amongst the Luba is given as an indication of being a non-violent people. And yet, as is clear from this statement, this does not negate the existence of violence. It is this acknowledgement of the Luba as a warrior people that moved our dialogue towards a description of the “well structured” and “well organized” forms of violence that, according to Ilunga Shimba and Longwa Banza Gary, were characteristic of “the time of our ancestors.” Both men offer multiple stories of this undefined time period to articulate this point; amongst them, we hear the following:

Each village was protected by guards who would monitor the movements of the villagers. On the arrival of a stranger from another village, they would be required to signal immediately whether they were friend or foe, through the careful positioning of their weapons. If foe, there would be violence. If friend, they would be generously welcomed, with the immense hospitality characteristic of Luba society; food, drink, accommodation, the offering of a “free woman” (Longwa Banza Gary, dialogue #18, June-July, 2014).<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Here, the gift of a “free woman” is explained as an unmarried woman who would be made “available” for a visiting male guest. This was framed as a peace-promoting exchange, where making available a “free woman” would prevent the likelihood of a foreigner interfering with the wife of another man and thus creating conflict between communities. The absence of the woman’s voice in the presentation of this practice as a peace-promoting exchange once again raises the earlier point; that who is given voice and who is silenced can have an enormous influence on conceptions and realisations of *Búmùntù*.

The emphasis here is on the use of violence to protect and defend the community and thus also to maintain social harmony. It thus appears that the history of a “warrior” people is not seen to be in conflict with the centrality of *Búmùntù* in Luba society. To further emphasize this point, a comparison with the more “disordered” violence of contemporary times was offered: drugged soldiers who shoot for pleasure; bandits, who resort to killing if their demands for money or goods are not obliged; and a trade network in human flesh are amongst the examples given. I was told the story of one of the local Mai Mai militia leaders<sup>122</sup> who, during the war, had started killing innocent civilians and even eating their flesh. Such abhorrent behaviours, according to Ilunga Shimba, had in turn enraged the ancestors who had withdrawn the power of this leader and had transferred it to a small child who apparently now leads this local *Mai Mai* group. Evidently, the image presented in this dialogue, of a shift away from the “just” violence of “our ancestors” to the “unjust” violence of the contemporary period, should be taken with caution. It is, after all, a contemporary imagining of the past. Still, I was curious to understand whether the assertion that “we are a warrior people, but not a violent people” also extended into reflections on contemporary experiences of violence, particularly given Ilunga Shimba’s involvement as a diviner to soldiers in the national army during the Congo wars. Again, despite assertions of a more “disordered” violence, the theme of the necessity of violence to protect and defend the community — and thus also to maintain social harmony — was still pronounced; however, it was Ilunga Shimba’s specific role in performing the “*kisaba*” for soldiers that took precedence in our dialogue.

This was not the first time I had encountered reference to the “*kisaba*;” I had been introduced to it by the Notables in *Kinkunki* who had confirmed a likeness between the investiture rites of a *Mulopwe* and the rituals required of combatants during times of violent conflict (dialogue #8, June, 2014). In that dialogue, the “*kisaba*” had been described as a concoction of various plants with water which were given to soldiers prior to combat. Mirroring the *Mulopwe*’s rebirth through the act of royal incest, I was told that during this

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<sup>122</sup> The term Mai Mai refers to a cluster of militia groups.

ritual act a combatant must pass through the legs of a woman. Rather than the physical sexual act, this is said to be a symbolic act where a woman will stand with her legs spread and the combatant will pass underneath. Like the *Mulopwe*, the combatant is said to be reborn a “new creature.” Again, this act is said to invest a certain power on combatants who, through the process, become invulnerable to attacks. Unfortunately, during our dialogue, there was no indication of the experience of the women that participate in such rituals.

This description of a ritual act conducted prior to battle is consistent with accounts of the ‘supernatural’ backdrop and the use of war rituals for power and invulnerability which are well known in the context of conflict in the DRC. This is particularly the case in regards to the Mai Mai, who, although not a unified group around the country, share both a nationalist ideology and a set of war rituals involving sprinkling a specially treated water (‘Mai-Mai’ in Kiswahili meaning water-water) onto combatants and in doing so making them invulnerable (Jourdan 2011). In these accounts, emphasis was placed on how these rituals are used as an effective mobilisation strategy for young recruits seduced by the desire for power (Jourdan 2011). In my dialogue with Ilunga Shimba, however, I was more interested in how he reconciles the expectation to embody *Búmùntù* in the everyday with the reality of those more exceptional times of violent conflict.

Although power and invulnerability are expressed as the purpose of the *kisaba*, they are emphasized as being conditional; power and invulnerability, either granted by ancestors or specifically deriving from such rituals, are intrinsically tied to the conduct of combatants and their respect of various rules. While in some cases these rules seem entirely based on beliefs around power (e.g. the interdiction against eating food prepared by a woman during her menstrual cycle), in other cases, rules seem to be based also on notions of ‘war ethics’ (e.g. the interdiction against any form of theft, or taking by force, a rule which I am told naturally includes an interdiction against the rape of women.) Evidently, the earlier reference to the “disordered” violence of contemporary times (including drugged soldiers who shoot for pleasure), is suggestive of an acknowledgement of the widespread abuse of such rules. Nevertheless, the way Ilunga Shimba presents his involvement with the national army during the Congo wars appears to suggest that he does not experience any overt tension between *Búmùntù* and acts of violence when they are deemed necessary.

One reason for this may be the role of the *kisaba* in demarcating spaces; once again, as with our dialogue in *Kinkunki* on the investiture rites, this description of the *kisaba* seemed to mark the existence of an alternate “extraordinary” field which exists outside or beyond the “ordinary” social field in which *Búmùntù* is expected to reign. The need for rituals also appears to mark the reality that the taking of human life is far from an “ordinary” human behaviour and is not “within” *Búmùntù*. This view was expressed more clearly when the Notables in *Kinkunki* and Ilunga Shimba described “*kusukola*,” another ritual used during times of violent conflict. Unlike the *kisaba*, which is conducted prior to entering into combat, the *kusukola* is performed on return from combat. This is a cleansing ritual, which has the purpose of purifying a combatant so that the spirits of his victims cannot follow him. Without this, combatants are said to pose an enormous risk to the community, as the violence of what they have experienced in combat may be brought into the community. According to the Notables in *Kinkunki*, “he may return, and even a small quarrel might lead him to kill again.” Ilunga Shimba echoes this perspective, expanding further:

When war has finished... (the combatants) cannot return directly to the community. They keep them first somewhere else, and make them undergo another ritual, in order to remove all they have seen, all they have done. Because what they have done there (during war) is considered abnormal, they cannot stay in the society like that. So they are taken somewhere, and they are purified, after being purified, now they return to being normal (Ilunga Shimba, dialogue #18, June-July, 2014).

The purpose of the *kusukola* appears to be to reintegrate a combatant into the ordinary social field and to restore their right relationship within *Búmùntù*. The earlier reference to the “disordered” violence of contemporary times leaves a lingering question about the extent to which such ritual practices are adhered to in the contemporary context.

Thus far in this encounter, the emphasis has been on the plausibility of “justifiable” violence to protect and defend the community against outside threats and thus maintain social harmony in that community. Again, the use of rituals to demarcate spaces has been observed, demonstrating the possibility of violence “outside” or “beyond,” which may be perceived as complementing, rather than contesting *Búmùntù*. Clearly, positioning Luba

communities as exclusively victims/defenders is problematic and — again — should be taken with caution; it does demonstrate, however, how violence can be justified as part of the struggle for peace. The justification of violence as a physical defence also leads to another possibility; attesting to this, a concurrent narrative arose in this dialogue, offering yet another angle.

The *Muluba* is not violent. He is a warrior, but he is hospitable. We are not violent, because we accept to live with everyone. But what the *Muluba* detests is when one minimizes him, when one treats him like he is worth nothing, a person or a people who have no value. That, the *Muluba* cannot accept; one must respect them, and if you respect them, if he feels respected, in that case, you will be welcomed... He is a warrior, but not violent. He becomes violent when you walk on his head, when you trample on him. At that moment, he does not accept it (Longwa Banza Gary, dialogue #18, June-July, 2014).

As can be seen in the above quote, the emphasis shifts from a “well-structured” and “well-organized” violence to protect and defend, towards a provoked and reactive violence, occurring in response to the experience of being disrespected or diminished. This introduces a theme that I encountered in many other dialogues as well: the Luba are a proud people with a spirit of resistance (and a “choleric” nature) and when dominated, oppressed or belittled, they will react with serious violence. In this dialogue, as in many others, the reference to a tension between the Luba-Kasai and Luba-Katanga provided an example of the spirit to resist domination. In the following encounter, I will turn to specifically explore this tension; for now, I remain with the general expression of a “spirit of resistance.”

Interestingly, although it is not overt in this statement, it is worth drawing attention to a close relationship between expressions of *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being and the expression here of the Luba as a proud people with a spirit to resist domination. Although my dialogue with Ilunga Shimba and Longwa Banza Gary does not elaborate on the extent to which they believe such forms of reactionary violence are considered within, outside, beyond or antithetical to *Búmùntù*, the acknowledgement of the relationship between *Búmùntù* and the spirit to resist domination does indicate the plausibility of the use of *Búmùntù* to justify violence as part of the struggle for peace. The

theme of protection and defence also applies here; however, rather than a physical protection and defence, there is an emphasis on the protection and defence of one's dignity or a people's dignity. The statement "we are a warrior people, but not a violent people" thus asserts the idea that the Luba, as with all people, have had and still have their own mechanisms for regulating and reducing the incidence of violence and for promoting peace and, as with all peoples, have condoned and continue to condone the use of a "just" violence as part of their struggle for peace.

***THEIR BÚMUNTÙ WITH OUR BÚMUNTÙ — IT CANNOT BE RECONCILED — NEVER!***

*Their Búmuntù with our Búmuntù — it cannot be reconciled — never!! Since our ancestors.  
There has always been conflict.*

*(Notables of the Luba Royal Court, dialogue #50, October, 2015)*

The above statement was the rather surprising response to the question: "thinking about peace, what is your hope for the future vision and application of *Búmuntù* for future generations of Baluba, for other Congolese, and the globe in general?" The question was intended as a space for envisioning a future of peace, concluding an already lengthy dialogue occurring in the principal residence of *Kinkunki*. Evidently the framing of this question was based in those expressions of *Búmuntù* that emphasize peace as our defining characteristic. The particular formulation, however, which asked not only about a hope for future generations of Baluba, but also for Congolese more broadly, led the dialogue into unexpected terrain. As seen in the above response, rather than the common emphasis on the unifying message of *Búmuntù* instead we are confronted by an expression of irreconcilable difference. Opening this chapter, I referred to the notion of peripheries to represent how different individuals (according to their diverse positionalities) may delineate differently what is acceptable "within" *Búmuntù*. Entering now into an exploration of *Búmuntù* as applied to the ethnic "other," we will witness a similar notion of peripheries, where some applications of

*Búmùntù* embrace a broader social field inclusive of a more diverse constituency, whilst other understandings narrow that field considerably, establishing “others” that exist “outside.”

If my father, my grandfather, did not eat toad. Me also, today I do not eat it.

This is to mean that in order not to lose our culture, our *Búmùntù* we must maintain that which our ancestors have left us. (Notables of the Luba Royal Court, dialogue #50, October, 2015)

This was the initial response to the question about a hope for a future vision and application of *Búmùntù*; it revealed the need to protect “our culture,” and “our way of being” and subsequently evoked an impassioned discussion on the threat posed by the presence of other ethnic groups whose *Búmùntù* is in conflict with that of the Luba-Katanga. The Luba-Kasai immediately arose as the most potent example. During this dialogue, a dismal picture was painted of the particular social ills that have arisen as a result of the large Kasaien population who have made Kamina their home; cunning traffickers and merchants who exploit and cheat people out of their money; prostitutes who flaunt their bodies on the streets; the smell of dog meat in the air. Again, the essence of these examples is that “their *Búmùntù*” is in violation of “our *Búmùntù*.” Moving beyond the theme of irreconcilable cultural differences, the dialogue quickly moved to the more familiar narrative which I was already well-versed in through its regular appearance through other dialogues. Throughout the course of our dialogues in and around Kamina, the Luba-Kasai had been regularly presented as a people “with a spirit of domination,” “who want to be above,” who are “proud” and “arrogant,” and who are “boasters.” In this dialogue, I was told that they arrive in Kamina “amongst us” with that “spirit of domination” and immediately behave as if they know more than others, that they search to be in top. After emphasizing the irreconcilable differences between “their *Búmùntù*” and “our *Búmùntù*” the following statement was heard:

Here, with us it doesn’t work. This is why, come a certain time, you will see, we will chase them out again. *Twende twende twende* (Go, go, go.) (Notables of the Luba Royal Court, dialogue #50, October, 2015)

Such a statement, in light of its historical antecedents, carries a particular weight; the more distant historical context to this statement has already been described in *Chapter Six*, as I

introduced Kamina as a *carrefour* (a *crossroads*) — “*where three lines meet;*” I mentioned the social and political tensions caused by the large influx of Luba-Kasai, who were given preferential treatment during the colonial period. The social and political tensions later reappeared surrounding the location of the Kamina military base, where Moise Tshombe and other leaders intended to promote an “authentic” Katangese national identity to fuel the Katanga secession. I also drew attention to the fact that it was Moise Tshombe of CONAKAT who asked the Belgians to construct the principal residence in *Kinkunki* (in which the current dialogue took place) as a gift, in recognition of King Kasongo Wa Nyembo as the “rightful” King in this region. Commenting on the final plaque, juxtaposing the year 1906 and 2015, I alluded to the signs of *duress* in the more recent history of Kamina; the image was that of the Kamina railway station crammed to capacity, countless bodies stationed there, awaiting transport to enable their exodus. It was the 1992 mass violence against the Luba-Kasai population, who, as a result of a prolonged political campaign blaming them for the economic woes of the province, were violently driven out of Kamina and the Katanga province.

Having heard some of the more brutal accounts of the violence against the Luba-Kasai in more recent history, I chose to challenge the above application of *Búmùntù*, with the question: “But to burn houses, to torture people, to kill, isn’t this against *Búmùntù*?” In the room, there appeared to be a general agreement with the challenge, with many nodding their heads and asserting that such behaviour was not condoned within *Búmùntù*. However, the Notable who had made the original statement continued: “But it is against their *Búmùntù* to come and force the introduction of their *Búmùntù* into ours.”

This is a powerful example of my earlier statement that whilst some applications of *Búmùntù* might embrace a broader social field inclusive of a more diverse constituency, others might narrow that field considerably establishing “others” that exist “outside.” In this case, this is also linked to the aforementioned relationship between *Búmùntù* and the spirit to resist domination; indeed, it is an example of how the need to protect and defend one’s personal or a people’s dignity against “outside” threats, can be used to justify violence as part of the struggle for peace. Once again, the presence of other voices in this dialogue, whilst not actively challenging but holding another view, is suggestive of how *Búmùntù* can be used to justify violence, and then, be used again to contest that same violence. I expand on

understanding the tensions between the Luba-Kasai and Luba-Katanga in the following encounter.

***WHEN YOU INTERVENE WITH BÚMUNTÙ — WITH HUMAN DIGNITY — YOU CANNOT TOLERATE THESE KINDS OF THINGS***

*We lived together but suddenly the politics introduced a certain culture and the population no longer wanted to live alongside each other.....the people no longer wanted to live in harmony. Especially the two tribes the Kasaiens (Luba-Kasai) and the Luba (Luba-Katanga). The politicians utilized certain strategies to divide the people and there was a terrible slaughter. We killed people seriously.*

*(Flory Sendwe, dialogue #27, September, 2015)*

The above account of the 1992 mass violence towards the Luba-Kasai population arose in a dialogue with Flory Sendwe. It was, in fact, in this same dialogue that I was given the image (recounted in Chapter Six) of the Kamina railway station crammed to capacity with the Luba-Kasai awaiting transport to enable their exodus. In stark contrast, then, to the irreconcilable differences described from the location of *Kinkunki*, the above account instead highlights a history of living together in harmony which was disrupted by politics. On the strategies of political manipulation used to create a culture of division, Flory Sendwe described how the familiar narratives about the Luba-Kasai as a people “with a spirit of domination,” “who want to be above,” who are “proud” and “arrogant,” were drawn upon. By tapping into these narratives and the aforementioned deep sense of freedom of the Baluba, politicians convinced the population: “you the Baluba you are being dominated by the Kasaiens (Luba-Kasai).” In doing so, they brought to the surface underlying tensions that had previously lain dormant. Thus, Flory Sendwe described how the greatest tragedy befell the many families, husbands, wives and children, who were caught in the crossfire, forced to separate along cultural lines that were once much more fluid, but had quite rapidly become dangerously fixed. It was in the midst of his reflections about this time period, that Flory Sendwe offered an alternative expression of *Búmuntù*.

But religion interdicts that one kills. That one maltreats. If it were not for the presence of religion, this violence would have become something else... When you intervene with *Búmùntù*, with human dignity, you cannot tolerate these kinds of things (Flory Sendwe, dialogue #27, September, 2015).

As is evident here, *Búmùntù* is seen to oblige one to resist and condemn the forms of violence which were earlier justified using the same concept. Importantly, in the reference to religion in this statement one can witness an alignment of *Búmùntù* with his Christian faith. Flory Sendwe expands on this: “violent behaviour is forbidden according to *Búmùntù* ... many Christians did not admire this behaviour... therefore, it is this *Búmùntù* which intervened.” Whilst we heard of the mass-violence perpetrated by the Luba-Katanga civilian population, according to Flory Sendwe, this was also a time when many individuals and communities rose above the pressure to divide, instead actively promoting unity and peace. He offered multiple examples: the pastor stationed on the side of the road, preaching to the passers-by: “we must not live like this, we are truly all human beings;” ordinary individuals who refused to participate in the violence and condemned the actions of their fellow citizens: “you must not act like this! Leave them, they are our brothers, we must live together, we must truly have human dignity;” buyers, who despite a time of great financial insecurity, refused to purchase reduced price items that were likely the profits of raids on Kasaien residences: “no, no, one must have *Búmùntù*, one must have dignity, this is the property of others, one cannot buy this.” As can be seen in this account, *Búmùntù* is presented as a concept which was actively drawn upon to promote peace and condemn violence. Once again, juxtaposed to the preceding encounter, this indicates the way in which *Búmùntù* can be used to justify violence, and then, be used again to contest that same violence.

### ***THE STRUGGLE TO FIND PEACE (SOCIAL HARMONY ALONGSIDE HUMAN DIGNITY FOR ALL, WITHIN A SPECIFIC SOCIAL AND CULTURAL MILIEU)***

This chapter has expanded on the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*, described in the preceding *Chapter Seven*. Whilst that chapter emphasized *Búmùntù* as a productive peace-enhancing and -maintaining concept with powerful potential to contribute to the struggle for peace, the present chapter moved beyond the more abstract expressions

of *Búmùntù* and into the many complexities and paradoxes associated with its application. Importantly, whilst I have drawn attention to the possibility of violence existing “within,” “outside,” or “beyond” *Búmùntù*, we have also witnessed the way in which differing emphases of *Búmùntù* can create a fluidity in its application. For example, the emphasis of *Búmùntù* as the ability to live in harmony within society (or within a specific social and cultural milieu) could lead to both gendered and ethnocentric applications, thus justifying various forms of violence. And yet, the emphasis of *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being could contest such applications and instead promote more inclusive and humanist applications. Importantly, this fluidity and its ability to be utilized to justify and then contest various forms of violence was seen not only across different dialogues with different individuals, but also within the process of the dialogue itself. Hence, I noted that *Búmùntù* can be stretched, reconstructed, redefined and critiqued to both justify and condemn forms of violence, all as part of the struggle for peace.

It is possible to read this fluidity and imagine it as an argument against the potential of *Búmùntù* in contributing to the struggle for peace. This is not my view; indeed, rather than see this fluidity and its ability to be stretched, as a negative or a weakness that leaves *Búmùntù* open to violence, I propose that this fluidity is suggestive of its real potential as a productive peace-enhancing and -maintaining concept. Indeed, I suggest that the better-known theme of social harmony, exists in mutual reciprocity with the more concealed yet equally important theme of human dignity. That is, the ability “to live in harmony with our fellow human beings” is the essence of *Búmùntù* precisely because of a fundamental belief in the sacredness and inviolable dignity of all human beings. In turn, to obtain one’s full human dignity (an earned dignity going beyond the sacred and inviolable dignity granted at birth) one must “live in harmony with our fellow human beings.” The fact that the act of such “living in harmony” occurs in a particular social and cultural milieu, in a specific community or society with its own “oeuvre” of beliefs, values and practices traversing ethical, legal, political, social and cultural terrains, means that the act of “living in harmony” also requires one to “live in society” and therefore (to a lesser or greater extent) adhere to culture, customs and/or societal expectations. Expressed in another way, to “be” human, expresses a right to experience a life in harmony with others (and therefore a life in society), whilst to “become” human, expresses the obligation to live in harmony with those others (and therefore live in

harmony in society).

I therefore suggest that the peace associated with *Búmùntù* may best be expressed as the struggle for social harmony alongside human dignity for all, within a specific social and cultural milieu. Rather than emphasizing *Búmùntù* as a set “oeuvre” of beliefs, values and practices which is inherently peace-producing, the embrace of this more complex multi-faceted *Búmùntù* which carries an idea of struggle reminds us that such a pursuit is necessarily complex and individuals, families, communities and Luba society as a whole have enacted and will continue to enact such a struggle according to varying positionalities and the exigencies of different moments in time and space. It is this fluidity and flexibility that allows *Búmùntù* to be stretched, reconstructed, redefined and critiqued. In light of the recognition of an ontological landscape in constant transition, it is also this quality of fluidity and flexibility that allows *Búmùntù* to *endure* and continue to be meaningful as a productive peace-enhancing and -maintaining concept with powerful potential to contribute to the contemporary struggle for peace.

## CHAPTER NINE: THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE AMONGST RESTLESS AND UNATONED BONES

In my personal preface to this thesis I described how the poetic prose of an imagined unidentified African soldier reflecting on “*restless and unatoned bones*” inspired the title of this thesis. It has again reappeared at various points to reiterate this purpose. Here, it marks a return to a central purpose of this work: to explore the struggle for peace (now framed as the struggle to achieve social harmony alongside human dignity for all, within a specific social and cultural milieu) in the contemporary landscape even replete with its *restless and unatoned bones*. This chapter will thus draw together the implications of *Part One: Tracing the History of an Enduring Struggle* and the preceding chapters of *Part Three: An Assemblage of Relational and Dialogical Encounters*.

The form that this particular exploration takes in this thesis is a dialogue on the life and application of *Búmùntù* in the contemporary landscape and a critical reflection on the presence of both *duress* and *endurance* which influence this life and application. Such an approach is not without its problems; as has been made clear in the preceding chapters, the association between the struggle for peace and the life and application of *Búmùntù* is not always a straightforward one. The ineffability of the term *Búmùntù* and the many complexities and paradoxes associated with its application created a significant methodological predicament. In order to invite you to hold the complexities of that predicament throughout the reading of this chapter, I begin with the first encounter “*the pirogue of the Baluba is already capsizing,*” which articulates one perspective on the decline of the Luba, as a culture and as a people. Through this articulation, I offer a number of layers or plateaus on which the framing of this chapter operates. It is from such an understanding, that we can move forward towards the exploration of the contemporary struggle for peace.

### *THE PIROGUE OF THE BALUBA IS ALREADY CAPSIZING*

*The pirogue of the Baluba (Luba people) is not only perforated, it is already capsizing.*

*(Mwembo 2007, p. 115)*

This is the verdict of Professor Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert recorded in his publication “*Développer l’Espace Luba : Un Défi et une Tâche Pour l’Association Socioculturelle Buluba Ibukata.*” (Developing the Luba space: a challenge and a task for the Sociocultural Association Buluba Ibukata)(Mwembo 2007).<sup>123</sup> It was motivated by the desire to render conscious his fellow *Baluba* to the decline of their culture and the profound underdevelopment of the Luba terrain. He thus asks his fellow Baluba to cease their apparent indifference, the deleterious nature of which he expresses with the following proverb:

*« Kulu kutema bwikobe  
Abe koipangula’mba  
Lelo kitema mukyoto ekika? »*

*(The leg which is being burnt in the fireplace is yours  
And you, you ask yourself the question,  
What is burning in the house?)*

As indicated by the request that “courage” is required to read his work, in the pages that follow, a bleak vision of the state of the contemporary Luba landscape is narrated. Evidence for the capsizing pirogue is offered as follows: an exaggeration of shame and fear, hatred and jealousy, pride, discrimination (exclusion) and accusations, ignorance, the political regime, gluttony and avarice, amongst other things. Hence, the capsizing pirogue and the underdevelopment of the territory to which Prof. Mwembo refers not only expresses an immense material poverty and material “underdevelopment,” but at a much more fundamental level, a capsizing that cuts to the core of the Luba cultural identity or “*L’âme Luba*” (the Luba soul).

In the course of my time in Kamina, I had many opportunities to converse with Prof. Mwembo and examine in more depth his verdict on the current state of the Luba *piroque* and the causes of its capsizing. As with my dialogues with others in and around Kamina, we explored this in the sense of the life and application of *Búmùntù* in the contemporary

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<sup>123</sup> The association “*Buluba Ibukata*” is an apolitical and not-for-profit association established in 1991 with the aim of bringing together all the Baluba, both in the DRC and abroad, to engage in dialogue and action for the improvement of the social, material, intellectual and cultural situation of all its members.

landscape. His rather bleak vision established a core theme which continued to appear in the dialogues to come: that the vision and practice of *Búmùntù* is being “lost,” “forgotten,” “hidden,” “threatened” or “trampled on” at present. Whether with academics, religious leaders, traditional and community leaders, diviners, or with communities in the surrounding villages, the general verdict was consistent. Although the severity of the diagnosis differed with each dialogue, shifting between the more pessimistic forecast and the more optimistic, it was rare to find a rejection of the basic premise. And yet, in line with the earlier described ineffability of the term, the meaning ascribed to this “loss” was incredibly varied.

For the most part, in line with the emphasis of *Búmùntù* as a productive peace-enhancing and -maintaining concept, to ask a question on the life and application of *Búmùntù* is to evoke reflections on the quality of social harmony and (respect for) human dignity in society, both directly relevant for our central concern of peace. The expressed “loss” of *Búmùntù*, then, was directly — in cause and consequence — associated with a perceived loss of either of these qualities and in turn, peace. Following a similar trajectory to the preceding two chapters, then, this chapter will begin with such an exploration — arising from those more abstract and idealized expressions of *Búmùntù* and drawing a strong association between the “loss” of *Búmùntù* and the absence of a “real peace.”

The acknowledgement, however, in *Chapter Eight* of a violence existing “within,” “outside” or “beyond” *Búmùntù* means that we must go further yet, critically examining how we are to interpret the expressed “loss” of *Búmùntù* and its association to the struggle for peace. Here, we remember that to engage in a dialogue on the life and application of *Búmùntù* in the contemporary landscape is not only to evoke reflections on the quality of social harmony and (respect for) human dignity in society; it is also to engage in a dialogue on the “death,” loss, resistance, resilience, adaptation, and transformation of Luba culture in the context of the history of an *enduring struggle*. As suggested by our explorations in *Chapter Eight*, this is likely to have different implications for the struggle for peace amongst those groups in society experiencing some degree of marginalization, exclusion and “Other-ing” in Kamina today; such as women and ethnic “Others.” This will be the focus of the latter parts of this chapter.

Before moving forward, there is one final point to make; despite the striking consensus found in this chapter that the vision and practice of *Búmùntù* is being “lost”, “forgotten,” “hidden,” “threatened” or “trampled on” in the contemporary context, it is important to recognize that we have already experienced a powerful contest to such a narrative. The previous two chapters have already provided a strong testimony to the fact that the concept of *Búmùntù* endures and continues to offer a shared frame of reference through which individuals, families, communities and Luba society as a whole are able to critically reflect upon their current lived experiences and strive towards an (admittedly variably cohesive) vision of peace. Expressions of the “loss” of *Búmùntù* in this chapter should thus be understood alongside a competing narrative, powerfully captured in the words of Nikolas Ngole Kalowa (dialogue #45, October, 2015), that “the concept of *Búmùntù* does not change, because it is human value and human dignity which does not change.”

### ***WHEN WE DO NOT RESPECT THE VALUE OF THE HUMAN BEING....PEACE IS VERY FAR***

The *BULUBA Cultural Centre* is a quiet space; located in one of the outer quarters of the peripheries of the city of Kamina, its surrounds are expansive and picturesque. Occasionally, the noise of children playing soccer in the adjacent open field spills into the centre’s boundaries, but mostly it is an apt location to sit and delve into a small library collection of books on Luba culture. The centre itself was established in 2005, an initiative of the Catholic Church, but more specifically Père Filip, a Croatian Missionary who has made Kamina his home. There are two buildings nestled in a compound behind the Catholic Church, one accommodating the centre’s translation and publishing services and the small library collection; the other, a largely empty building, presents the shell of *La Musée Luba*, a project still in progress, its purpose being to promote language and culture of the Luba. A justification for this purpose is captured in the preface to the centre’s two publications written by Mbale Kilumba, “*Mwendela Kiluba*” (*Grammaire Kiluba*) and “*Nkindi Ya Kiluba*” (*Proverbes Kiluba*): “The culture of a people is their soul. And one can enter the soul of a people only by their language” (Centre Culturel Buluba 2006, n.d). Citing Rémy de Gourmont, it continues: “When a people no longer dare to defend their language nor speak

it, they are ripe for slavery”(Centre Culturel Buluba 2006, p. 5).

It was from this location, in a dialogue with three centre staff, Tata Amedée, Pierre Mbanga and Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte (dialogue #46, October, 2015) that I encountered one of the most powerful articulations of the theme that the vision and practice of *Búmùntù* is being “lost”, “forgotten,” “hidden,” “threatened” or “trampled on” in the contemporary context. Indeed, before even broaching the question of the life and application of *Búmùntù* today, it arose organically and almost immediately in response to a general question on the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*:

Women have value, Men have value, children have value, each person has their value in the community. For our ancestors, they respected the value of each person, and that created harmony in the community, and this harmony created peace.....Today, there is no longer respect for the value of each person. The man does not respect the value of the woman, the woman also does not respect the value of man. The father does not respect the value of the children. The children do not respect the value of their parents... In order to speak of peace in the quarter, in order to speak of peace in the city of Kamina, in order to speak of peace in Congo... one must first commence with peace in the house. If today, there is no peace in the house, it is because we no longer respect the value of human beings (Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte, dialogue #46, October, 2015).

In the course of this dialogue, we were able to expand on this initial expression with many examples offered to demonstrate that “*Búmùntù* is disappearing, is being trampled on, is being devalued” (Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte, dialogue #46, October, 2015). Such examples, reflected in other dialogues also, included: the division of land into private property, the naming of children with Christian rather than ancestral names, the narrowing of family to its nuclear form rather than extended kinship networks, the diminished observance of full mourning rituals, the lack of respect given to the dead during such rituals, the increased prioritisation of economic and professional gain over and above social relationships and responsibilities, growing divisions in society influenced by increasingly divisive politics, a lack of hospitality towards foreigners, a reduced generosity to those in need and a general lack of

empathy for the suffering of the other. Whilst some examples from this summary relate to specific cultural practices, for the most part our dialogues identified this “loss” as more of a paradigm shift of the basic values informing society. This was expressed as a departure from the communitarianism, solidarity, and unity of a life lived in harmony with others (continually associated with the respect for the human dignity of all in society) and towards an individualism. Again, this resonates through a collection of voices heard in the course of my time in Kamina. Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert (dialogue #4, June-July, 2014), for example, observes that “the Luba community is undergoing an imitation. She is moving away from communitarianism towards individualism.” In other voices, we hear this paradigm shift expressed, more specifically, as a movement towards the “*chacun pour soi*” (everyone for himself/herself) imperative.

Today the people live in individuality. The society is no longer as it was. Now it is the “*chacun pour soi*” (everyman for himself) (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015).

Here amongst us, within our personality, we used to live truly in family... but with colonization, we started to change... we started to live the “*chacun pour soi, Dieu pour tous*” (everyone for himself/herself, God for everyone)... we have lost this value of living together (Gekaf Kabamba, dialogue #42, September, 2015)

We have not lost our *Búmùntù*, we know it all, all the characteristics to live together, but we hide it. Now we have fear, there is no longer any trust. So, to secure our lives, it is necessary to hide it. It is not lost, just hidden. Because when there is poverty, it becomes “*Chacun pour soi*” (Tata Amedée, dialogue #37, September, 2015).

The final commentary from Tata Amedée returns us to the location of the *BULUBA Cultural Centre*. His observation is particularly significant; rather than a sense of finality with a more permanent “loss,” he emphasizes a temporary “hiding” resulting specifically from the current socio-economic context. Certainly, the preceding chapters already offer a powerful affirmation of the *endurance* of, at the very least, the concept or abstract ideal of *Búmùntù*.

Still, the striking disjuncture between this ideal and the contemporary landscape is captured in our dialogue, when we place the statement “*Búmùntù* is disappearing, is being trampled on, is being devalued” in the context of earlier articulations presenting *Búmùntù* not as an innate or inherent state, but as a moral ideal, expectation, or recommendation.

I think that *Búmùntù*, as you have said here, is an ideal. But, an ideal even more so today, because at the relational level, all relations are becoming vicious. There are many problems. You can find even within one family that people don’t want to speak to each other. Even in one family there are insults. There is no respect, the youth vis-à-vis the adults, the adults vis-à-vis the youth. But if within the home, within the family, there is no respect, how can one respect someone who passes by on the road? All that is a sign that all these values are being trampled on (Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte, dialogue #46, October, 2015).

The acknowledgement of a striking disjuncture between *Búmùntù* as an ideal and *Búmùntù* as praxis in the contemporary context leads us to the powerful assertion about the association between the expressed “loss” of *Búmùntù* and the contemporary struggle for peace.

The big problem is the valorization of the human being. Even if this economy is not good, but if we respect each other and value the dignity of the other, we will have peace. We will have peace in the home, and then that will bring peace in other homes also. And in this way, the peace can extend out within the quarter, and within the city, and within the region, and within the country. But when we do not respect the value of the human being today, it becomes difficult. Peace is far from coming, even when they say: “oh they had peace negotiations, this person came to speak with this person so that there is peace in the Congo.” Ah ah ah ah! It is very far away. That's my point of view. We are very far away (Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte, dialogue #46, October, 2015).

As this assertion reveals, for Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte a strong association exists between a perceived diminution of respect for the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being and the absence of peace. Whilst I have echoed this perspective as it reflects a core theme found in our dialogues more broadly, I am also conscious that it is problematic and accentuated in

the above response from Lwala Kazadi Hypolite, as it moves beyond a focus on a local “relational peace” towards peace at the national level. Taken as a statement isolated from the dialogue itself, it appears to emphasize a loss of social behaviour at the local level as a cause of violence, thus seemingly pathologizing local communities and drastically simplifying and reducing the importance of the immensely complex and inter-penetrating local, national, regional and global systems which produce violence and impede peace.

It is not my intention, nor do I believe, was it the intention of the individuals and communities I interacted with, to make such a simplistic association. Instead, when taken in the context of our dialogues as a whole, the expressed association between a “loss” of *Búmùntù* and the struggle for peace often recognized the complex and inter-penetrating local, national, regional and global systems. This is captured in the following statement from the same dialogue:

It is necessary that the *Muluba* goes beyond this stage, both at the mental and material levels, that he will recover his dignity and by recovering his dignity that the peace can come. If we have many wars it is because we always have this problem of the Westerner who comes looking for his interests, and if the one who is in power does not give him his interests, so he will say (to the people) “take the weapons and go and fight him — “me, I will be behind you.” But, if the *Muluba*, the Congolese, the African becomes responsible for himself (if he recovers his dignity), even if the West arms him with weapons, he will refuse “No! we will build our house, we will build our neighborhood, we will build our country!! (Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte, dialogue #46, October, 2015).

In this way, our dialogues recognized at once that the struggle of individuals and communities to enact a local “relational peace” can have an influence on a broader peace, just as the absence of a broader peace can have an influence on the ability of individuals and communities to enact a local “relational peace.” Adding to the complexity is a historical awareness, whereby notions of *duress* and *endurance* convey both the agency of individuals and communities, but also encourage a constant awareness of the history of an *enduring struggle* and its impact on the local and present struggle for peace.

## ***NSHIKANYI REIGNS TODAY! ANOTHER EXCURSION INTO PROVERBS***

*The culture of Búmùntù is losing its value in the present generation.....Jealousy and egoism have taken a very advanced position in the sentiments of people who do not want others to grow and develop. Today, in Kamina or amongst the Baluba generally, poverty reigns and engenders in the population a wicked spirit which is virulent, one calls this “NSHIKANYI.” It is a diabolic sentiment which pushes people to see and do nothing but evil. So, the consequences are always the destruction of the wellbeing of the others. Every day one hears of this along with weeping and wailing. Fires and attacks by evil forces and black magic. And for what: jealousy!! And yet, the churches of all dominations, are growing like mushrooms.....In brief: “NSHIKANYI” reigns today!*

*(Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse, dialogue #51, October, 2015)*

The above statement from Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse offers a particularly stark account of contemporary Kamina. It reflects a broader theme found throughout our dialogues of increased social divisions and an exaggeration of “*nshikanyi*” variously translated as hatred, jealousy or envy, witchcraft, bad faith and bad/evil intention. In *Chapter Seven*, this term was introduced through a proverb about a hyena rejoicing at the birth of an antelope. It appeared alongside a collection of other proverbs that had been adopted and integrated into our dialogues to draw out the place and meaning of peace associated with *Búmùntù*. I return to these proverbs, as they were also used during our dialogues as prompts to reflect on the contemporary struggle for peace. Here, they reappear, once again alongside just some of the many voices that reflected on their application in the contemporary landscape. My choice to begin this section with the title “*nshikanyi* reigns today” is indicative of the way in which reflections of the contemporary landscape arising from these proverbs tended to echo the above rather stark account.

### **Kudja talala ikwabana biya (to eat in peace, share well)**

Earlier this proverb emphasized the value of the equal distribution of wealth/resources (through the metaphor of sharing food) as a key factor in a peaceful and harmonious society. Within the villages, there were some affirmations that such an equal sharing persisted today. One man in the village of Lweji (2015), for example, responded: “We share well here! If money doesn’t suffice to share amongst everyone, one finds something to do so that this money can help the population.” However, for the most part, most individuals and communities offered their view that there had been a significant diminution in the value of sharing wealth/resources. Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte (dialogue #46, October, 2015) commented that whilst in the old days neighbours would automatically welcome others to eat together, “today, one can eat here and the child of the neighbour is famished for two days and one doesn’t call them to join.” Another powerful account was offered by one woman in the Village of Katongola:

Even if my husband is going to kill an animal in the bush, he covers it up (he cuts it into pieces and puts it in the bag) with all the bones in the bush, and he puts everything in the bag, he returns here (to the village). No one will know that we have hidden something here. It's quiet. There's no sharing (Village of Katongola, dialogue #54, October, 2015).

For the most part, it was the experience of an immense poverty that was referred to in explaining such a diminution of the value of sharing. Individuals and communities emphasized the way in which the inadequate wealth/resources for one’s own family has resulted in increased competition over resources and a more protective and self-preserving behavior. Such an explanation, however, can only be understood in the context of an ontological landscape in transition. Certainly, the expression of increased competition over resources (at the level of individuals/families) can only be understood in the context of a modern capitalist global economy, where private wealth acquisition through the participation of individuals in the labour market supersedes more collectivist forms of production and distribution. Similarly, it can only be understood in light of the narrowing of family to the nuclear family rather than extended kinship networks. Moving beyond the more tangible, however, I’d also like to draw attention to another theme that arose from this proverb. This

was the theme of an increased mistrust in society whereby the fear of either being attacked by or accused of witchcraft or poisoning has also resulted in the decrease in communal practices of sharing food, and in social divisions more broadly. This is heard in an account from Tata Amedée:

Today, when one calls the child of the neighbour, and he comes to eat at your house ... if later he falls sick, they will say no, you have caused this with witchcraft. You have given him bad food, this is why he has fallen sick. Yes! It's really that, this idea of poison and witchcraft, it has entered into the mentality (of the people) ... it is also really cultivated with the priests ... so the solidarity, that we have spoken about, this solidarity as a value, it is disappearing, even in the families, the families are separating, because one can say, if you go to visit your elder brother, he will do witchcraft on you, so don't go there, and the family is being divided (Tata Amedée, Luba Cultural Centre, dialogue #46, October, 2015).

I will return to this theme of an increased mistrust in society later in this chapter, to argue that this sense of a more disturbing “toxicity” or disfunction at the relational level requires a deeper reflection that goes beyond the more generalized expression of a shift from communitarianism to individualism.

### **Twayayi ibantu kashiku kobe wa enda? (with unity there is strength)**

Through this proverb individuals and communities reflected on the need for co-operative action in order to have success in any endeavour. This time, more so than the previous proverb, there was more indication of the persistence of such co-operative action in for example; agricultural practices which are always done in groups or in community; in the way in which people travel in groups as a safety net for difficulties faced en route; in the use of “saving groups,” where individuals band together to create a community-based, savings-led microfinance. However, in line with the broader theme of a paradigm shift of the basic values informing society, many responses also reflected a sense of the diminution of such co-operative action. According to one man in the Village of Lunge (2015) “we help each other,

we respond to each other, but only in the case of problems.” Reflecting on the call of “kwikukila” (the collective response for the cry for help), one woman in the Village of Katongola (dialogue #54, October, 2015) responded that: “Here there is no longer « kwikukila. » It is only used to replace the straw of the rooves. Today the call and reponse no longer exists. They will tell you to pay money.” Whilst mostly responses remained focused on co-operative action at the local level, one powerful response from Nikolas Ngola Kalowa expanded this further yet:

You have killed our society and it is now *chacun pour soi* (everyone for himself/herself) and solidarity exists only superficially. At a deeper level people are truly divided and I can even say it's like when we read the bible “If a kingdom is divided against itself, this kingdom cannot subsist.” They have divided people and now it is easy to destroy them. The division has entered more than everywhere — even in the family, even in the clans and even, amongst the Luba as a whole..... with such a division, it makes the community fragile and weak (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015).

As is evident in the above response, this proverb also invoked reflection on the way in which social divisions more broadly can prevent development and progress. In the expanded response, Nikolas Ngola Kalowa emphasized the impact of colonization on the many ethnic divisions amongst the Luba themselves.

### **Dyabutula ngulungu. ki.mungu nandi ka.same butombe (the hyena rejoices at the antelopes birth)**

Again, we return to the proverb which earlier introduced the term “*nshikanyi*.” This proverb, as described earlier, is used as a condemnation of any thoughts and actions which cause the suffering of another. Interestingly, whilst reflections on the previous proverbs resulted in some divergent responses, the consensus on this particular proverb was startling. Like the powerful assertion of Ilunga Kimilunda Wafika Tharcisse, that “*nshikanyi* (hatred...) reigns today!” many individuals and communities, both in Kamina and in the villages, emphasized the particular relevance of this proverb in the contemporary context characterized by the *chacun pour soi* (everyone for himself). According to Tata Amedée (dialogue #37,

September, 2015) “it is the worst now, it exists a lot. Again, because of modernity. Here, amongst us, it is hatred!” Similar responses can be heard in the following voices:

Yes, it is truly exaggerated, truly exaggerated! I have been trying to explain this, isn't it perhaps because of the diminution of resources, and people are fighting to survive, isn't it a problem of poverty? Because truly at the moment the *Baluba* (Luba people) live in a miserable poverty. Isn't it because of this, is it really only the “bad faith” which causes this? (Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert, dialogue #30, September, 2015).

Eh! It is even the image of the society! It is the very image of the society! Inequality has meant that each time one who is raised (rich) has a fall (fails), the poor they will rejoice. They say; we are now identical. It is the inequalities that create this.....This is it! The image you can have of this reality is that the poor are in a hole and they are trying to get out but the rich trample on them and the poor who are in the hole, they also pull on the feet of the rich so that they fall also (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015).

As can be seen in the above quotations, there was a strong sense that the exaggeration of *nshikanyi* (hatred...) captures something quite fundamental about the contemporary landscape; that “it is the image of society!” Given the extent to which *nshikanyi* (hatred...) is viewed as a violation of *Búmùntù*, this articulation of its exaggeration in the contemporary landscape expresses powerfully the aforementioned sense of a more disturbing “toxicity” or disfunction at the relational level, which I will return to.

**Kwa mukulu kikaiko ke kubulwe kikakutwala (never neglect anyone in society, in the community or in the family)**

Finally, through this last proverb individuals and communities reflected on the inclusion and valorisation of all members of society today. In light of the prominent use of this proverb regarding Elders, many reflections on the contemporary context centred around the status of Elders in society today. Whilst some emphasized the ongoing valorisation of Elders, many others emphasized a diminution of their status. One woman in the Village of Katongola

(dialogue #54, October, 2015) expressed this as follows: "No! There is no longer respect for Elders. The Elders themselves are considered witches." Indeed, the theme of Elders being considered as witches appeared across numerous dialogues. An explanation for this is offered by Nikolas Ngola Kalowa:

Today, Elders are considered as witches in society. They are rejected. They are abandoned. People think that when someone rests a long time on this earth, they must have killed many people to live for so long. Especially if there are a lot of cases of death in the family, they will not search far for the cause, they will just say immediately it is this old person here! ...Yes, one must drop the Elders because they practice tradition and that is bad. Now, one takes modernity, so one rejects tradition, and one rejects also that which represents tradition, the Elders. (Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015).

The above observation from Nikolas Ngola Kalowa is particularly intriguing in light of another dialogue where the ancestral value of Elders was described. In this description, the long life of an Elder was apparently interpreted by Luba society as a "blessing" and a sign of a "good" (moral) life (Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte, dialogue #46, October, 2015). The above reflection of Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, however, can be seen to present the converse, where the long life of an Elder is interpreted as a sign of witchcraft. Importantly, the reflections here on the rejection of all that represents "tradition," and the belief that "tradition" represents something "bad," framed elsewhere as "evil," may go some way to explaining such a stark contrast. This is reflective of other dialogues too, where a dramatic shift in the valorisation of "tradition" has impacted the valorisation of all those individuals in society that represent "tradition;" for example, the diviner whom I was warned against speaking to because "you know that that is the work of the devil." It is also reflective of other dialogues which described the "scapegoating" of those considered "weak," "vulnerable" or "inferior" in society. Where, for example, Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte (dialogue #46, October, 2015) argued that "today it has become very common, especially amongst those children whose parent have died and they've become orphans, in these cases, they become the scape goats. In many families, the witches are these children, the thieves are these children."

Again, as stated earlier, the above reflections on the struggle for peace in the contemporary landscape arose from reflections on just a small collection of proverbs. Other proverbs, may have resulted in other kinds of reflections. However, together they do, once again, give a sense of a striking disjuncture. Whilst in *Chapter Seven*, reflections on these proverbs were suggestive of the ideal of a “relational peace” with an emphasis on social justice, social cohesion and human rights amongst other factors; the reflections that these proverbs have provoked on the contemporary landscape offer a very different image of society: a general diminution in the valorisation of each human being in society; a general sense of a breakdown of social connectedness and social cohesion; the unequal distribution of wealth/resources; the diminution of practices of sharing wealth/resources; the diminution of collective aid and action; the exaggerated presence of hatred, jealousy, resentment, witchcraft, and bad faith; and the exploitation and scapegoating of those members of society considered “weaker” and more “vulnerable.” Together they seem to affirm the statement made earlier by Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte, dialogue #46, October, 2015) that *Búmùntù* is an ideal, “but, an ideal even more so today.”

### ***THE DESTRUCTION OF YOUNG GIRLS: THE AWAKENING OF WOMEN***

Thus far in this chapter, a strong association has been made between the perceived “loss” of *Búmùntù* and the struggle for peace. And yet, as stated in its early parts, to engage in a dialogue on the life and application of *Búmùntù* in a contemporary landscape does not only mean to engage in a dialogue about the present experience of social harmony or the respect of the sacred and inviolable dignity of human beings; it is also to engage in a dialogue about “death,” loss, resistance, resilience, adaptation and transformation of Luba culture in the context of the history of an *enduring struggle*. Given the articulation in the previous chapter of an often rigid and categorical portrayal of the “lower status” of women in Luba culture and, hence, the suggestion of a violence as part of, aligned to, or “within” *Búmùntù*, we need to consider the particular experience of women in relation to the “loss” of *Búmùntù* and its association with the struggle for peace. In this assemblage, I present two concurrent themes: the “destruction of young girls” and the “awakening of women.” Both themes offer an

alternative perspective on the “loss” of *Búmùntù* and its association with the struggle for peace.

Within the zone of Kayamba, NGO S.O.I.A.F. has taken responsibility for the medical consultation of 105 women and young girls who have been victims of beatings, torture and rape. The actions were committed by a group of men from the village of NTANDA at the marshlands of KABENDE BENDE where the women had gone to fish 15 km from their own village of KAMAYI on 13/06/2014. The cause of the conflict was the dispute over the boundaries of a common lake shared by the two villages, KAMAYI and NTANDA. Armed with machetes, spears and other war tools, these perpetrators of gender-based violence made these women and girls walk with their upper bodies nude. They also took their items of clothing as well as other possessions they had with them (Annual Report of the *Synergie des Organisations, Initiatives et Associations Féminines (S.O.I.A.F)*, 2015)

The above account can be found in the Annual Report of the *Synergie des Organisations, Initiatives et Associations Féminines (S.O.I.A.F)*, but it was recounted to me during one of my dialogues with Véronique Kilumba Nkulu (dialogue #41, September, 2015) and offered as just one example of the particular vulnerability women experience in times of conflict (in this case, a local land dispute). Such vulnerability, she argued, is an exaggerated form of the already existing vulnerability women experience as a result of the prevalence of gender-based violence in everyday situations. This was confirmed in numerous dialogues where gender-based violence — sexual violence as its most visible form — were presented as a major challenge in the contemporary struggle for peace. Indeed, in early dialogues in the villages during my initial field trip, the theme of sexual violence, expressed as *konakanya mwana wa bakaji* (to destroy a young girl), regularly arose as one of the most common responses to a more general question on the meaning of violence in the Luba tradition. Although intended as a conceptual question, it did often spark a reflection on lived experience, suggesting that the prevalence of this particular form of sexual violence was perceived as one of the major concerns of individuals and communities today. During my

dialogues with Mme. Véronique, I was able to enquire further about the frequency of responses related to the “destruction” of young girls.

It means that there has been a lot of abuse. Really! The women here have been abused and it continues until now. It is only with awareness raising campaigns that it has begun to diminish. In the old days, they would say that a woman is a “thing” that you can take. So, with that, what do you think they will do to you? How many times have we heard it said: “They have raped my daughter!” And then, you will hear the father of the perpetrator or the perpetrator himself, saying “but, is there a pregnancy?” And if the victim says no, there is no pregnancy, then they will say “Oh, don’t worry! It was just a game” (Véronique Kilumba Nkulu, dialogue #41, September, 2015).

The lack of seriousness attached to the perpetrators’ action was contrasted with the consequences for the young girl, who, amongst other factors, may struggle to find a husband because of the high value placed on virginity before marriage. According to Mme. Véronique, this is why it is said that “she has been destroyed.” Whilst communities appeared to be very concerned about the “destruction of young girls” in the villages, and viewed it as a serious breach of Luba culture, from Mme. Véronique’s perspective, such a “destruction” was given a status of normalcy in Luba culture in the past and it is only because of a more recent shift in community attitudes brought about by the awareness raising efforts of women’s organizations that it is changing. This was also expressed during our earlier dialogue with Mme Véronique and her colleagues Jeannette Kabwika Mitonga and Ruth Mwange. Here, Mme. Jeannette suggested that it was significant that our dialogues in the villages emphasized the “destruction of young girls,” but left silent the issue of other forms of sexual violence<sup>124</sup> and gender-based violence more broadly. She sees these other forms of violence

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<sup>124</sup> Evidently, sexual violence against older women (who have already engaged in sexual activity) is not represented here. Note that “*kucela mukaji wa bene*” (to sleep with the wife of another) was another common response to the general question on the meaning of violence in the Luba tradition. In such an example, however, the emphasis was most often placed on the violence perpetrated against the other man whose wife has been taken rather than the woman herself. Similarly, on the theme of rape within marriage, I was specifically told by one individual that rape cannot exist because he had paid the dowry, the inference being that the dowry secures the right for a man to demand sexual relations when he pleases.

remaining more hidden because (particularly in the villages) they still have the status of normalcy for many.

I believe that it is not only sexual violence, it is gender-based violence, physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence, psycho-social violence. The cases of sexual violence are really frequent here, because they are the more visible. The other forms of violence are more hidden, because there is always the *Búmùntù* that awaits you (Jeannette Kabwika Mitonga, dialogue #26, August, 2015).

The reference to *Búmùntù* in the above statement returns us to the earlier assertion that various forms of violence against women (often expressed as men's "physical discipline" of women) are considered acceptable within *Búmùntù* and that a woman who exemplifies *Búmùntù* is one who submits to and obeys her husband, and indeed remains silent about any mistreatment in order to protect her husband's reputation and maintain the sacrosanct institution of the family. From this perspective, it may well be the resilience of *Búmùntù* (at least its highly gendered applications) that is associated with the absence of a "real peace."

Nevertheless, according to each of these women there has been enormous progress, which brings us to the concurrent theme of an "awakening of women;" as women's voices have increasingly been heard, an increasing recognition of the problem of sexual violence, of other forms of gender-based violence and the status of women in society more broadly has occurred, a theme resonating in many other dialogues as well. As just one example, Rev. Odette Makonga Kyakutala shared with me her experience as a Methodist Pastor of coming from a culture where "traditionally" women were not permitted to preach. She expressed strong enthusiasm at the progress that has been made, in which enormous changes have occurred regarding the role of women in the church and in society more broadly during the last twenty years or so, particularly in her own Methodist tradition.

Now there are many women pastors. Women have not been sleeping during all this time. Formerly we were suffocated. But today what men can do, even we women can do it also. Women here also have a gift to give, a contribution to make. We have begun to organize ourselves within groups. In a group one

cannot tremble. In the past, even if you are given just a prayer to say (within the worship service), the men would think that God is not with you because you are a woman. They would consider us like “sinners,” like “*Kintu*” (objects). We were not allowed to stand and speak before men. They think that women and children must be protected because we are vulnerable, but we are not vulnerable, we are not. We are strong! It is only a matter of being encouraged. We have something to contribute within the society! (Rev. Odette Makonga Kyakutala, dialogue #28, September, 2015).

During this dialogue we were accompanied by her husband, Rev. Ilunga Mwepu Dikonzo Edmund, also a Methodist Pastor. Both shared with me their experience of having had their *Búmùntù* called into question because of the way they have chosen to challenge those highly gendered roles and functions associated with *Búmùntù* in their married life, both by Rev. Odette being a highly active leader within the Church community, and by Rev. Edmund being actively involved in the “traditionally” female roles and function within the home, and the raising of their eight children. Nevertheless, although in the early parts of our dialogue, *Búmùntù* was presented as being aligned to the belief in the “naturally inferior” status of women in Luba culture, it was again *Búmùntù* that was being appealed to in order to critique and contest those highly gendered applications and in order to elevate the status of women:

What we want is to balance life. To be in harmony. So that there is harmony in our society. We do not want one party to be left behind, while another party is privileged. Both the two parties must be privileged. Both parties must understand what we want with the *Búmùntù*. *Búmùntù* is not to dominate. *Búmùntù* is not to marginalize. *Búmùntù* is not to diminish the other and you are looking to be on the "top" — No !! (Rev. Ilunga Mwepu Dikonzo Edmund, dialogue #28, September, 2015).

In the above statement, once again one can witness the way in which *Búmùntù* can be utilized to justify, and then contest various forms of violence and inequality. Although previously in our dialogue, *Búmùntù* was associated with the diminishment of women’s status, it is the language of *Búmùntù* which is being used to raise that status. There is thus

much evidence that the “loss” of the highly gendered applications of *Búmùntù* associated with a more rigid and categoric interpretation of “our culture,” “our way” or the way of “our ancestors” is being adapted and transformed as women (and the men that support them) continue to enact the complex struggle for peace in the contemporary landscape.

***IF A MOTHER DOESN'T LOVE HER OWN CHILDREN 100%, HOW CAN SHE LOVE THE CHILDREN OF ANOTHER PERSON?***

*Here in Kamina, it is Luba (Katanga) country. So, if I can speak for the Luba (Katanga) only, amongst themselves, and say that this spirit/mentality of Búmùntù, it reigns at only 50%, then when one considers the other tribes surrounding them, could I say that it would reign even at 25%? It is this that I have observed. Because if a mother doesn't love her children at 100%, how can she love the children of another person? Is it possible?*

*(Nkamba Kalala Adril Dav, dialogue #39, September, 2015)*

Reflecting on “warrior peoples,” I previously noted the narrative about the Luba as a proud people (with a “choleric” nature), who, when dominated, oppressed or belittled will react with a serious violence. The example of the ethnic relations between Luba-Kasai and Luba-Katanga conflict served as testimony to the Luba-Katanga spirit of resisting domination. Later, the statement: “their *Búmùntù* and our *Búmùntù*, it cannot be reconciled, never!!” was quoted which demonstrated how an ethnocentric and exclusionist use of *Búmùntù* to assert “our culture,” “our way of being,” or “our collective identity” could be used to justify violence against the ethnic “other.” Like the experience of women, then, it is likely that the life and application of *Búmùntù* will have particular implications for the other ethnic groups living in Kamina amongst the Luba. Although I did not initially plan to undertake dialogues with these ethnic “others,” over time, the regular reference to the Luba-Kasai motivated me to seek out these missing voices. The above quote is one such example from the perspective of a Luba-Kasaien, only temporarily residing in Kamina for business purposes, it suggests that the perceived “loss” of *Búmùntù* has a greater impact on other ethnicities living alongside the Luba. To explore this, I turn to a dialogue with Gekaf Kabamba (dialogue #42, September,

2015), the President of the Luba-Kasai Community of Kamina, in his small court yard accompanied by two other members of the Luba-Kasai community.

After affirming that *Búmùntù* is practically the same concept amongst the Luba-Kasai and the Luba-Katanga, Gekaf Kabamba offered his own evaluation on the life and application of *Búmùntù*, specifically as expressed through the current relations between the two groups; unlike the above quoted rhetorical question, his response was more nuanced.

This consideration, it is situated in time, space and circumstance. So, it changes, it depends. I can give the example of my two children who live in Brazil. They are Luba-Kasai, but when they are in Brazil and they meet a Muluba of Katanga, what do they say? They say, “here is our family, here is our blood.” We can also find ourselves in a circumstance where we find the Kasaiens and the Katangais making a coalition. Because here in Congo, we say there is the Eastern block and the Western block. So, they might say we don’t want someone from the other block like the Bandundu or the Bakongo, we prefer we stay with those who are from the Eastern block (like the Kasaiens and the Katangais). And then, there are those moments where we do not make a coalition because there is a problem that is dividing us. Like when there are political reasons (Gekaf Kabamba, dialogue #42, September, 2015).

According to Gekaf Kabamba, today is a time of peace and the Luba-Kasai and Luba-Katanga are free to live in peace with each other. However, it is a tentative peace, “it is like a dog and a cat. They are domestic animals that live together in the same house. But you can put food for the cat to eat, and food for the dog to eat... and at a certain moment you might find them beginning to fight.” Summarizing the relationship, Gekaf Kabamba concludes with the repeated statement: “so this trust, it is reserved, the trust between us is reserved.”

In order to explain such ‘reservation’, Gekaf Kabamba began with one apparently popular account of the point of division between the Luba-Kasai and the Luba-Katanga. It was a story of family rivalry, where, at the King’s death, the brother in law appointed the son of the second wife as a successor, rather than the rightful son of the first wife. As it was told, the

first wife, wounded by this rejection, took her children and set off towards Kasai, thus forming the branch of the Luba-Kasai. And so, division between these two related ethnic groups is in fact found “in the blood,” a term he clarified further, stating that, really “it refers to a mentality that is inculcated within us from a young age and with which we grow, a belief that is within us and from which this division is born also.” This story provided a foundation for the continuing dialogue in which Gekaf Kabamba offered a number of historical moments, his argument being that the particular social and political tensions arising out of the colonial period have, in turn, continually been manipulated for political gains.

Some of these historical moments have already been introduced in previous chapters: the preferential treatment of the Luba-Kasai by Belgian colonialists, the manipulation of the social and political tensions resulting from this preferential treatment at independence to fuel the Katanga secession, the 1992 mass violence towards the Luba-Kasai population driven out of Kamina. Expanding on the more contemporary example, Gekaf Kabamba, described how the then weakening dictator Mobutu was able to influence certain Katangese politicians to promote fear in the population that if Etienne Tshisekedi (his main opposition and a Luba-Kasai) got into power, the Luba-Kasai would once again come and dominate the mineral-rich Katanga province. As a result, all Luba-Kasai in Kamina were targeted for their link with Tshisekedi’s political party, the *Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social* (UDPS), whether they were indeed supporters of the party or not. A similar targeting of the Luba-Kasai occurred during the more recent 2011 elections, where President Joseph Kabila’s (a Katangese) main opponent was, once again, Etienne Tshisekedi (Luba-Kasai).

It was, however, when I introduced the writings of Tempels into our dialogue that the perceived “loss” of *Búmùntù* and its implications for the contemporary struggle for peace was most powerfully expressed. More specifically, as in many dialogues, as the theme of “loss” arose, I took the opportunity to invite a reflection on the particular confession that: “we have taken our share of the responsibility for having killed “the man” in the Bantu,” (Tempels 1959, p. 13) more than seventy years after it was written.

This personality, this way of life, this solidarity, this way of seeking the peace that was between us, the colonizers took this away from us... It was to do

what? To better reign? We were together, but the colonizer separated us. There was a unity, but when the colonizer saw this, he said “no, these people all united will become stronger. The best formula is to do what? To divide to better reign. So somehow this colonization, the Belgians who came to us, they took away this *Búmùntù*, this personality, this love that was in us, this fraternal love, because we consider ourselves people of Congo (Gekaf Kabamba, dialogue #42, September, 2015).

Indeed, that Tempels’ confession was both “just” and “honest” was a common theme throughout the dialogues with academics and community leaders (who were familiar with Tempels’ work). We will hear it repeated in the following encounter. Evidently, the depiction here of a “unity” and “fraternal love” between Luba-Kasai and Luba-Katanga prior to colonization contradicts somewhat the earlier story of a division that exists “in the blood.” And yet, as can be seen from the above statement, there is a particularly powerful emphasis on the perceived “loss” of *Búmùntù* as a result of the colonial imposition and the current tentative peace between Luba-Kasai and Luba-Katanga. Expanding on this, Gekaf Kabamba asserts that according to *Búmùntù* “a stranger should always be welcomed,” unfortunately, according to him, this expectation to welcome a stranger has been enormously disrupted. Of course, it is important to remember the earlier observation that *Búmùntù* provides both the obligation for a society to respect the sacred and inviolable dignity of a foreigner, whilst at the same time placing the obligation on the foreigner to live within the society and to adhere to the local culture, custom and/or social expectations. It was the latter which was heard in the earlier statement “their *Búmùntù* with our *Búmùntù* — it cannot be reconciled — never!!” Once again, then, as in the case of women, the more dominant narrative of a loss of *Búmùntù* contributing to an absence of peace, can be seen as having been made more complex. Indeed, the resistance, resilience, adaptation and transformation of *Búmùntù* (in this case, seen through a more rigid protectionism of “our culture,” “our way of being,” or “our collective identity” when faced with a perceived threat) may also be seen as contributing to an absence of peace, or viewed from another angle, it may be seen as part of the struggle for peace.

I have now explored the core theme of *Búmùntù* as being “lost”, “forgotten,” “hidden,” “threatened” or “trampled on” in the contemporary context and its implications for the struggle for peace. Like in previous chapters, *Chapter Nine* started with a simple narrative, drawing an association between the “loss” of *Búmùntù* and the absence of peace; over time, the many paradoxes and exceptions encountered in everyday applications of *Búmùntù* resulted in more complexity and nuance in considering their implications for the struggle for peace, where both loss of and resilience of *Búmùntù* can be seen to both inhibit or contribute to the struggle for peace. Whilst this has offered insight into the many challenges of the contemporary struggle for peace, thus far, the theme of a “lost”, “forgotten,” “hidden,” “threatened” or “trampled on” *Búmùntù* has been taken at face value as a consequence of the history of an *enduring struggle* described in earlier chapters of the thesis. As yet, we have not entered more profoundly into the enduring forces contributing to these processes of loss, but also of resistance, resilience, adaptation and transformation. It is here, then, that I turn to a more in-depth critical reflection on the presence of *restless and unatoned bones* that continue to influence the struggle to live *Búmùntù* and thus also the struggle for peace.

### ***THE END OF THE BULOPWE: AN ONTOLOGICAL DISRUPTION***

*LA RÉVÉLATION: Vidye, Butobo et Bulopwe Dans L’Empire Luba* (REVELATION : God, Divination and Kingship in the Luba Empire) is the title of a small self-published booklet offered to me by its author, Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse. It begins with a strange statement: “The best way to regret the past, is to make the present better” (Mgr Clavet). It continues, however, with a more direct observation: “Each people retain their honor in their ancestral traditions. One is proud of such traditions, but even more proud when these traditions are recognized and respected by foreigners. On the other hand, one becomes unhappy or even revolted if they are interpreted in an erroneous way or if they are ridiculed.” This establishes the central purpose of the booklet as an apologetic work “to defend our ancestral religion against the clerical skepticism of the past and the present day; and to restore our history to the truth that they did not want to recognize.” As indicated by its title, as well as articulating the fundamental beliefs of a Luba ancestral religion such as the belief in a Supreme God and creator of the world, the belief in various spirits (Bakishi) and the various rituals and

ceremonies associated with these beliefs, another major focus is the inextricable relationship between Luba religious belief and the Luba political structure.

This inextricable relationship was captured in his earlier statement: “The royal power or the *Bulopwe* came from God.” Whilst this statement appeared in *Chapter Six*, alongside an assertion of the continuation of the *Bulopwe*, the sacral model of Kingship from the Notables in Kinkunki, we also heard his contest to such an assertion in the verdict of an “end of the *Bulopwe*” and that all the *Balopwe* “have rejected the customary rights of BÚMUNTÙ BWA BALOPWE.” In this statement, the core theme of a “loss” of *Búmùntù* extends beyond the individual, family or community level to Luba society as a whole and its trajectory as a people. This offers a sense of a crisis of the broader political structure (inextricably bound up in an ontological order) as a frame within which the expressed “loss” of *Búmùntù* should be understood. Beyond the sense of a more generalized loss of social behaviour at the local level heard in many responses, Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse’s summary of the life and application of *Búmùntù* in the contemporary landscape is much more indicative of a broader societal crisis:

Life has become untenable or unlivable: evil engenders evil. Politics, if not poor governance: people no longer know what to do: they do not know where to go. The consequences of this are: the villages are empty, Kasai is empty, there is unemployment, drugs, theft, violence, sexual promiscuity, uncontrolled population growth etc. Returning to the problem of life: “*Kudya talala I kwabana biya*” (To eat in peace, share well), there are those who take the part of the lion. To not think of others... this creates unease, discontent, revolt. In general, VIOLENCE (Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse, dialogue #51, October, 2015).

Again, it is a particularly stark account of the contemporary situation; in the context of our dialogue more broadly, numerous causal factors were offered, but once again, it was during a reflection on the impact of that history of an *enduring struggle* and the earlier statement that “we have taken our share of the responsibility for having killed “the man” in the Bantu” (Tempels 1959, p. 13) that the ontological foundations to such a crisis were most clearly expressed.

It (the killing of “the man” in the Bantu) is the truth in the sense that the IDEALS contained in the oral tradition of the *Muluba* people, a tradition which expresses the true history of this people notably through the many proverbs and sayings which express the existence of both vertical relationships; which call human beings to the fear of God; and horizontal relationships; which are expressed by *Búmùntù*. These are the IDEALS that the Belgian priests wanted to abolish and they did so by destroying the spirit and those men who were charged as guardians of the *Bantu*. The abolition of the spirit (the ideal of the fear of God), the *Bitobo* (priests) and the sacred places that supported the relationship of men with *Vidyé* (Lord God) has led to the abolition of the *Bulopwe* (the royal power) which was the guarantor of the relations referred to as *Búmùntù*. Today people behave as they want (Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse, dialogue #51, October, 2015).

At this point, it is worth returning to an earlier observation on the varying expressions of *Búmùntù* made in *Chapter Seven*. Here, I noted that whilst many expressions of *Búmùntù* were suggestive of a moral ideal, expectation, or recommendation individuals and communities are obliged to strive towards, there was also much evidence of *Búmùntù* as an ontological relational reality, “an intimate ontological relationship” between all created beings. Indicative of such a perspective is the above articulation of the abolition of the *Bulopwe* (and the structures that invested it with sacred authority) as a cause of a demise of *Búmùntù*; hence, an expressed “loss” of *Búmùntù* was less associated with the behaviour of individuals and communities and more with the disruption of an ontological order, or to return to the earlier cosmogram, a disruption of the cosmological equilibrium on which the “cycle of life” depends.

This perspective was communicated in other dialogues where an absence of peace was associated with: the failure of Luba society to worship their own true God or to give offerings to their own ancestors, the severing of the “cycle of life” by the failure to name new-born children with the names of ancestors, the decline in the performance of initiation rituals, the complete disappearance of the true *Bitobo* (priests) and a dramatic growth in the number of fraudulent characters, varyingly called “diviners,” “fetishers,” “healers,” and “witches”

manipulating the desperation of individuals for personal financial gain. This is significant as it emphasizes the reality that for many individuals and communities, the struggle for peace involves, to varying degrees, not only the struggle to live in harmony with our fellow human beings, but more broadly, the struggle to live according to the will of a Supreme God, mediated through a complex network of lesser divinities, in a world where the forces of all living beings, whether human, animal, vegetable and inanimate, are inextricably interconnected. For such individuals and communities, one major barrier in the contemporary struggle for peace is the fundamental shift in the perceived value and even presence of such a network, and thus the decline in the performance of cultural practices deemed as necessary for maintaining the ontological conditions necessary for peace.

This also has implications for the valorisation of those individuals (or roles and functions) in society that have been aligned with the task of maintaining these ontological conditions. This was seen, for example, in the earlier reflection of the decreased value given to Elders and the suggestion that because of their alignment with the “traditional,” they are rejected, abandoned and even “considered as witches in society.” That they are even “considered as witches” is particularly pertinent; whilst a decline in beliefs and practices associated with such a network may result in the diminished value and power attributed to such individuals and groups, the observation that they are “considered as witches” is suggestive of the continued belief in the existence of such a network, accompanied this time by an increased fear and anxiety around the meaning attributed to such a network (such as its association with “evil” and its perceived opposition to Christian beliefs and values) and the practices associated with it. This is captured quite powerfully through the voice of Kasongo Wa Ilunga Madeleine, a local diviner who recounted her experience of being ostracized and publicly shamed as a “witch” and then with a smile remarks “but who do they come to when they are in need?” (dialogue #34, September, 2015).

Whilst the changing status and function of individuals and groups in society was directly discussed in many of our dialogues (including Elders, diviners and other individuals and groups who identify with “traditional” religious beliefs and practices), I would like to extend this further to consider the changing status and function of women. Given the exploration in the previous chapter of women as “chiefs at night,” suggestive of a specific feminine power

associated with the ancestral realm, I suggest that the decline in beliefs and practices associated with that ancestral realm may also have stripped women of some forms of value and power associated with that realm. Perhaps more unsettling, however, is the suggestion of the persistence of beliefs in such a feminine power, accompanied now by increased fear and anxiety around the meaning attributed to such a power as “evil.” I describe this as unsettling in light of the example provided in the previous chapter, where Luba (or Congolese) women’s failure to share their “secrets of the world” was provided as a reason for the underdevelopment of the Luba (or Congolese) territory, as well as the articulation earlier in this chapter of the increased incidence of “scapegoating” of those considered “weak,” “vulnerable” or “inferior” in society. In the context of a contemporary landscape rife with socio-economic inequalities and widespread poverty, I suggest that such factors may also have implications for the prevalence of gender-based violence.

### *LEAVING CORPSES TO ROT: SHIFTING SOCIETAL VALUES*

*In the society back in the day, I could lack something to eat at mine, but I could not pass the night famished. I belonged to a community and in this community, it was not everyone that lacked. There would be somewhere that I could go, where they would manifest the Búmùntù. They would not leave me like that. As we say, one cannot leave a corpse to rot, one must bury it. This is Búmùntù. But the society that you have brought here, she leaves the corpses to rot.*

*Because when you don’t have, you don’t have, you are alone. But when I don’t have, I am part of a society, (I am not alone).*

*(Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015)*

As can be seen in the above assertion from Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, the earlier theme of a paradigm shift away from the communitarianism/solidarity/unity of a life lived in harmony with others towards an individualism characterized by “chacun pour soi” (everyone for himself/herself) is once again apparent. However, here one finds a much more direct accusation that “you” (Europeans/Westerners/Whites) have brought this society here. In the

dialogue with Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, it is clear that the problematic he is referring to is that of a largely unequal society, characterized by immense class divisions between wealthy and poor. Such inequality, he earlier argued, signifies a profound violence in and of itself, according to *Búmùntù*. The reference to the rotting of corpses in the above statement echoes the same sense of violence. More specifically, it accentuates a scandalous disregard for the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being. As with the above exploration of an ontological disruption, the image of an introduced society who “leaves the corpses to rot” also extends the core theme of a “loss” of *Búmùntù* beyond the individual, family or community level, to Luba society as a whole. It is thus a powerful metaphor which expresses a sense of the shifting foundational values upon which Luba society is based. This, in turn, has implications for the earlier expressed reciprocal relationship between the central values of social harmony and human dignity.

In order to consider this, it is worth returning to my assertion in *Chapter Six* that Kamina’s introduction into a modern capitalist global economy continues to be deeply relevant to our exploration of *Búmùntù* and the contemporary struggle for peace. Specifically, I suggest that it is important to remain conscious of the continued relevance of those colonial categorizations of the “*Muntu*,” the “evocative census designation” of Homme Adulte Valide (HAV), which offers just one indicator of the positioning of the “*Muntu*” (human being) as a “unit of labour” in a profoundly exploitative context (Young 1994, p. 9), as well as of the “*évolué*” (literally, the ‘evolved’) who had, through European education, accepted European values and patterns of behaviour and was thus deemed free of “uncivilized” practices (Young 1965, p. 85).

The first expression of the “*Muntu*” as a “unit of labour” can be seen as a profound violation of that fundamental belief in the sacredness and inviolable dignity of the human being. Indeed, our dialogues on *Búmùntù* provided a powerful critique on the experience of colonisation as the *kintu-ization*<sup>125</sup> of the *Muntu* (human being). Our dialogues, however, also point to evidence of the post-colonial mirroring of the colonial *kintu-ization* of the *Muntu*. Such a mirroring, was expressed as one of the causal factors in the diminished respect for the

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<sup>125</sup> The use of the term *kintu* (object) replacing *muntu* (human being), carries this same sense of a scandalous disregard for the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being.

sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being in the contemporary context.<sup>126</sup> Turning to reflect on the categorization of the *évolué*, one can also see a profound violation of *Búmùntù*. Indeed, according to this categorization, one's "earnt" dignity was associated with their differentiation from, rather than their harmony with, their social and cultural milieu. Whilst this was not as overtly referenced during our dialogues, the notion of an "earnt" dignity based upon differentiation was clearly heard through repeated references to a contemporary landscape, dividing between the less valued and the more valued, between the poor and the rich, the uneducated and the educated, the *villageois* and the urbanite, the subsistence farmer and the employee, the blue and white collar worker, the kilubaphone and the francophone and ultimately the powerless and the powerful.

The power of *Búmùntù* to critique such societal divisions was clear throughout our dialogues; yet, it is also important to acknowledge that traces of these shifting notions of "earnt dignity" could be found within expressions of *Búmùntù* also. This was seen, for example, in the articulation of a man's ability to establish himself economically as a sign of his *Búmùntù*.<sup>127</sup> One particularly striking example of this was the label of a lack of *Búmùntù* being attached to a man who had failed to establish himself by a certain age, to marry, to have children, to get a tertiary education and to "succeed" economically. Whilst the "earnt" dignity associated with procreation is seen as characteristic of the Luba "tradition," I suggest that the reference to economic and educational status is reflective of a more modern notion of an "earnt" dignity. A more striking aspect of this example, was that this judgement, directed with what I perceived to be a mocking tone, came from two individuals who had previously described themselves to me as *évolués*. In contrast, the man whose *Búmùntù* was in question was labelled a *villageois*. Beyond the more obvious trace of shifting notions of "earnt dignity" in

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<sup>126</sup> Importantly, such an acknowledgement should be taken alongside another argument offered earlier; that the evolution of *Búmùntù* itself and its *endurance* in the contemporary context may draw from this experience of kintu-ization, the resistance and resilience to the prolonged experience of dehumanization, violence and oppression generating the deep-rooted African spirit of humanism. Such an acknowledgement, however, was less pronounced in our dialogues.

<sup>127</sup> Importantly, this was not always framed in purely economic terms; a man's economic success, for example, could be associated with other core social expectations such as his ability to marry, to have a family and to appropriately provide for that family. However, the association between economic success and the ability to fulfil these other core social expectations is in itself more evidence of the shifting foundational values of Luba society. One example offered was the shift within the dowry system from a previously symbolic exchange to what was presented as an increasingly commercial "purchase" arrangement, with some parents of brides demanding significant sums of money.

this example, one might also reflect upon the use of *Búmùntù* as an attack or judgement towards an individual. Rather than exclusively resulting in “loss,” a paradigm shift to individualism and the “*chacun pour soi*” (everyman for himself), can no doubt also alter the way in which *Búmùntù* is applied. The above labelling of a lack of *Búmùntù* to an individual makes sense in the context of the “*chacun pour soi*” where it is the responsibility of the individual to “establish himself;” to acquire his own personal wealth; to find his own wife...etc.

Drawing together this sense of the shifting foundational values and their implications for the struggle for peace, I return to the aforementioned reciprocal relationship between the two central values of social harmony and human dignity. If, as many individuals suggested, there has been a post-colonial mirroring of the *kintu-ization* (objectivation) of the “*Muntu*,” visible in the diminished respect for the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being, then naturally this could also be seen to affect a diminished obligation to “live in harmony with our fellow human beings.” Similarly, if, as has also been suggested, there are shifting forms of an “earned” dignity whereby one attains dignity through a differentiation from, rather than a harmony with, “our fellow human beings,” then this can be seen to affect a movement towards social division rather than social harmony.

Although many aspects of our dialogues tended towards a more nostalgic imagining of a *Búmùntù* society in the time of “our ancestors,” disrupted by the colonial imposition of a “*chacun pour soi*” (everyone for himself/herself), we can recognize a more nuanced position found woven throughout our dialogues. Certainly, the ancient Luba political structure, earlier criticized for its “terrible violence,” has also been characterized by a differentiated social order and a scandalous disregard for the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being. It is important, then, to hold such perspectives alongside the above accusation that “you” (as a reference to europeans/westerners/whites) have imported this society which “leaves corpses to rot.” As highlighted elsewhere it is understood that the *enduring struggle* associated with the colonial encounter occurred ‘on top’ of an existing local struggle, where individuals, families, communities and Luba society as a whole have enacted and will continue to enact the struggle for peace according to varying positionalities and the exigencies of different moments in time and space. In the context of the current reflection, one possible reading

from our dialogues is that a colonial differentiated order has reinforced the differentiated order found within the Luba tradition, whilst both stripping and “mystifying”<sup>128</sup> the meaning and purpose of that order, thus weakening the values, beliefs and practices which sought to safeguard the human dignity of all members of the society regardless of their positioning within that order. To provide just one example, one might argue that the colonial hierarchical order has augmented the power of men as “chiefs in the daytime,” whilst stripping and “mystifying” the power of women as “chiefs at night.”

### ***THE TEARING OF THE SOCIAL FABRIC: HUMILIATION AND THE DESIRE TO RAISE ONE'S HEAD***

In the above two encounters, the focus has been on *duress*, delving deeper into the various processes seen to be contributing to a “loss” of *Búmùntù* in the contemporary landscape. In both cases, the emphasis has been on the more tangible and direct impacts of colonialism. I now, return to a reflection on the narrative of such a “loss,” in light of earlier references to collective trauma. In *Chapter Three*, in reflecting on Tempels’ confession of the killing of “the man” in the Bantu, I suggested that such a confession may refer not only to the systematic and direct destruction of local ontologies as part of the colonial “*mission civilisatrice*,” nor to the more subtle and gradual transformation of the ontological landscape on which *Búmùntù* is enacted; but also to a collective trauma which, beyond “a condition of broken bodies and shattered minds,” is also understood as a “cultural object” (Casper & Wertheimer 2016, p. 3). The latter, I suggested, was pertinent in reflecting on the struggle for peace in a post-colonial/post-conflict environment where there has been ongoing and cumulative experiences of “regular, chronic, ordinary conditions of violence, death, exploitation, uncertainty and poverty in which individuals and groups are forced to survive” (Beneduce et al. 2006, p. 41)

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<sup>128</sup> My use of this term, here, draws from a dialogue with Prof. Phînéés Yumba Musoya (dialogue #53, October, 2015) where he argued that colonization had resulted in “a mystification of the vision of the Muntu.”

Certainly, the many expressions in this chapter of a paradigm shift towards a society characterized by the “*chacun pour soi*” (everyone for himself/herself) is intriguing in light of the earlier articulation of collective trauma as a “damage to the tissues that hold human groups intact” but also “the creation of social climates, communal moods, that come to dominate a group’s spirit” (Erikson 1995, p. 190). Whilst the more prominent explanations tended towards the more tangible, the idea of a more intangible “tearing of the social fabric” was also very present in our dialogues. This was heard, for example, in the earlier assertion that because “we have fear, there is no longer any trust. So, to secure our lives, it is necessary to hide it” (Tata Amedée, dialogue #37, September, 2015). It also resonated in the expressions of a society where “all relations are becoming vicious;” where “*nshikanyi*” reigns; and where an increased mistrust in society has resulted in the fear of either being attacked by or accused of witchcraft or poisoning. Such expressions, I suggest, offer a sense of a more disturbing “toxicity” or disfunction at the relational level, obliging us to go beyond more generalized explications of cultural transformation and engage more profoundly with notions of collective trauma, and therefore, healing also.

Thus far, I have been reflecting on the expression of a paradigm shift towards “*chacun pour soi*” in light of understandings of collective trauma as a tearing of the social fabric. The emphasis, therefore, has been on the contemporary experience of social harmony — or the lack thereof. Extending the consideration of collective trauma further, many aspects of our dialogue also pointed to its implications on the contemporary experience of human dignity. This resonates, for example, in the following articulation of a disdain for menial work, a theme found across our dialogues more broadly.

The Muluba of today is proud. He refuses to go to work for someone. Even he is dying of his poverty. Someone says "So, come sweep for me, I will pay you." In spite of his poverty, in his deep pride, he says, "No, I, the child of the *Muluba*, I am a chief, I cannot sweep." It is this pride, even while he is starving, he continues to refuse to sweep ... Yes, of course, it is because of the experience of humiliation. That's why I said earlier that they (the colonizers) killed us, because we were humiliated and now we want to raise our head a little. It is this pride. Sometimes misplaced (Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie

Robert, dialogue #30, September, 2015).

This apparent disdain for menial work was often presented as a quality inherent in the Baluba, part of a “profound spirit of royalty” which has existed since time immemorial. And yet, as can be seen in the above account, a strong association is also made with the experience of humiliation. This desire to “raise our head a little,” was expressed elsewhere in our dialogues also. It was most pronounced in the earlier discussion of the Luba as a “proud” “warrior people” with a spirit of resistance (and a “choleric” nature), who, when dominated, oppressed or belittled, will react with serious violence. Earlier, I made reference to a close relationship between expressions of *Búmùntù* as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being and the expression of the Luba as a proud people with a spirit to resist domination. Extending this further, one can witness a strong association between the experience of being humiliated, dominated or oppressed, and a reactionary violence which seeks to “liberate,” “raise one’s head,” or indeed “seek revenge.” This is powerfully captured in the following statement:

Slavery may be the origin of violence. The *Baluba* possess a very deep sense of *Bwâna* (freedom): which comes from *Mwâna* (child). The children of men are born free. They deserve respect — even the children of poor people vis-à-vis the sons of Kings or rich men. Hence, the slave who finds a means of liberating himself becomes violent in revenge (Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse, dialogue #16, July, 2014).

A relationship between shifting forms of an “earned” dignity based around differentiation, the subsequent experience of humiliation (of those who have been differentiated from), and a provoked and reactionary violence as a means of “liberating” oneself is particularly pronounced in the example of ethnic relations between Luba-Kasai and Luba-Katanga. I suggest that such processes are particularly pertinent in light of an argument heard in *Chapter Three*, that the experience of dehumanization and humiliation is central to acts of violence and also to cycles of violence (Lindner 2002, 2006).

*THE DEATH (AND RESURRECTION) OF THE 'PERSON': THE DEATH, LOSS, RESISTANCE, RESILIENCE, ADAPTATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF BÚMUNTÙ*

*He (Tempels) is honest. With this statement, he is honest. I believe that even God might forgive him for all his other mistakes.<sup>129</sup> They killed our soul, they killed us through all forms, by fear, by shame, by the inferiority complexity, by brutality. All this, until the point that we disappear. At a certain moment, today you find that you don't even know who you are. Are you a Muluba? Are you a Westerner? Who are you? You do not know. Why? Because our soul was killed, asphyxiated. Here, he is honest*

*(Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert, dialogue #30, September, 2015).*

In the opening of this chapter, I marked a return to a central purpose of this work: to explore the contemporary struggle for peace (now framed as the struggle to achieve social harmony alongside human dignity for all, within a specific social and cultural milieu). I noted that this chapter would draw together the implications of *Part One: Tracing the History of an Enduring Struggle* and *Part Three: An Assemblage of Relational and Dialogical Encounters*. Drawing the chapter — and now also the thesis — towards its conclusion, I would like to return to the identification of the death (and resurrection) of the “Person” in *Chapter Two*, where I described the devastating impact of ontological violence evidenced in the “death” of peoples, cultures and their ontological landscapes, but also the continued resistance, resilience and thus “resurrection” in the face of such a “death.” I return to this, because they are themes that have resonated profoundly with the themes of this chapter. The most tangible evidence of this has been the core theme of a “lost”, “forgotten,” “hidden,” “threatened” or “trampled on” *Búmuntù*. The above quote from Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert, arising again as a reflection on Tempels’ confession, brings to light such a resonance. Such reflections have tended to emphasize the ongoing impact of the more systematic and direct destruction of local ontologies as a result of the colonial “*mission civilisatrice*.” The direct nature of such violence and its deleterious effect is expressed with powerful language that echoes the

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<sup>129</sup> This was intended as a humorous statement in the context of an earlier conversation where Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert identified himself as a major critic of Tempels; his criticism being that Tempels had failed in accurately representing Luba ontology.

finality of “death.”

When reflecting, then, on the struggle for a “relational peace” in the contemporary landscape, individuals and communities emphasized that such a “real peace” was very far. They described a paradigm shift of the basic values informing society, a movement away from the communitarianism, solidarity, and unity of a life lived in harmony towards an individualism characterized by the “chacun pour soi” (everyone for himself/herself). Whilst, our exploration into the complexities and paradoxes associated with *Búmùntù* has cautioned against the more simplistic narratives of the loss of *Búmùntù* unequivocally resulting in an absence of peace, a dialogue on *Búmùntù* has nevertheless opened the space for a rich reflection on the quality (or lack there of) of social harmony and respect for human dignity within the contemporary landscape. Such a reflection conveyed, amongst other factors: a general diminution in the valorisation of each human being in society; a general sense of a breakdown of social connectedness and social cohesion; the unequal distribution of wealth/resources; the diminution of practices of sharing wealth/resources; the diminution of collective aid and action; the exaggerated presence of hatred, jealousy, resentment, witchcraft, and bad faith; the exploitation and scapegoating of those members of society considered “weaker” and more “vulnerable;” the breakdown of community conflict resolution practices; the prevalence of sexual violence against women; the prevalence of gender-based violence more broadly; the presence of ongoing tension and division between different ethnic groups; an economic climate in which people struggle to survive, let alone thrive; and even the loss of identity and thus dignity and self-respect at both the individual and collective level.

And yet, despite an overwhelmingly dismal sense to this contemporary landscape, in the context of our dialogues more broadly, there was little evidence for such finality of the “death” or “loss” of *Búmùntù*; much stronger is the sense of an *enduring struggle*, a profound wounding of the collective Luba soul, or in the words of Prof. Phînéés Yumba Musoya (dialogue #52, October, 2015) “a mystification of the vision of the Muntu,” that individuals, communities, and Luba society as a whole are still struggling to overcome as part of the struggle for peace. It is the immense complexities of such a struggle that this chapter has attempted to capture. Beyond the emphasis on the more systematic and direct destruction

of local ontologies, the chapter presented the way in which the “loss” of *Búmùntù* but also resistance, resilience, adaptation and transformation has occurred through a more subtle and gradual transformation of the ontological landscape on which *Búmùntù* is enacted, as well as the ongoing and cumulative experience of “regular, chronic, ordinary conditions of violence, death, exploitation, uncertainty and poverty” (Beneduce et al. 2006, p. 41). In doing so, the chapter pointed to the *endurance* of *Búmùntù*, alongside the immense challenges and complexities associated with enacting it today given the immense (and often violent) transformations that have occurred over the Luba terrain. This returns us to an earlier statement made by Nikolas Ngole Kalowa (dialogue #45, October, 2015) that “the concept of *Búmùntù* does not change, because it is human value and human dignity which does not change.” Now, Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert (dialogue #30, September, 2015) extends this further: “*Búmùntù* does not change, because it is a rule that has been established since the formation of Luba society. And today, even despite everything that the Baluba have experienced, exile, colonisation, independence, dictatorship, the present moment, *Búmùntù* does not change in principle.” Although I cannot assume the particular “facet” of *Búmùntù* being emphasized by Prof. Mwembo, here, it is my view that it is the struggle within *Búmùntù* that endures. In contrast, then, to the notion that *Búmùntù* is a set of beliefs, values and practices that are inherently peace producing, I argue that its true potential is in the onus it places on individuals, families, communities and Luba society as a whole to engage in such a struggle in order to “become” authentically human. Hence, I return to reiterate the third and final rationale I earlier articulated as a justification for this thesis: that a dialogue on *Búmùntù* “encourages us — no, insists — that we constantly ask this question, perpetually return to it”<sup>130</sup> — how indeed do we “live in harmony with our fellow human beings?” After all, if “to be” is to be in harmony with our fellow human beings” a dialogue on *Búmùntù* obliges us to be curious, to be creative and to become “authentically” human. Ultimately, a dialogue on *Búmùntù* obliges us to the *struggle for peace even amongst restless and unatoned bones*.

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<sup>130</sup> Again, the phrasing of this sentence is drawn from Praeg (2014, p. 29) who, although referring to *Ubuntu*’s insistence on another question: “what is a *just* justice?” captures quite aptly the idea that the question of *Búmùntù* or *Ubuntu* is and should remain a perpetual one.

## CONCLUSION: ANCHORED IN A SPIRIT OF DISCERNING HOPE

In the introduction to the thesis, I established the struggle for peace in the DRC as my central concern; I suggested that the apparent disjuncture between the concept of *Búmùntù* and the DRC's seemingly interminable history of violence would guide this work. As I sit here to write concluding comments to this far-reaching, yet forever limited, journey, it is once again this disjuncture that remains, alongside a lingering question about the hope for the attainment of the kind of "relational peace" (a social harmony alongside human dignity for all) described in this thesis in the context of the DRC as a whole. We need to remember that although it has been present as a backdrop, this broader picture has not been the focus of this thesis. Instead, I have concentrated on the struggle for a "relational peace" at the local level, in a locale which has remained largely protected from the more intense forms of violent conflict occurring elsewhere across the nation and in neighbouring villages over the past two decades. I have not entered into a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between the local "relational peace" associated with *Búmùntù* and the national, regional and international dimensions of contemporary violent conflict occurring elsewhere across the nation as a whole.

As I write, then, I am conscious of this broader struggle; I am conscious that it is now 2018 and fifteen years have passed since the "official" end to the Second Congo War and my own awakening to the ongoing crisis persisting in the DRC. I am also conscious that the deadline for DRC's long awaited presidential elections looms nearer. Over the last two years, the continued postponement of these elections by current President Joseph Kabila, whose second and final term was set to expire on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016, has resulted in significant unrest. This is a nation that has never known a peaceful government transition. According to the last accessible report of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), the security situation has deteriorated amidst the uncertainty of a complex political transition; there has been regular targeting of Congolese security forces, clashes between various militia, ethnic killings and abductions amongst other factors (United Nations Security Council 2017 para 15-16). In addition, approximately 8.5 million persons, including 5.5

million children, are currently in need of humanitarian assistance, 43% of children under the age of 5 are deemed to be chronically malnourished, 3.8 million persons are currently internally displaced and so on and so forth (United Nations Security Council 2017 para 34). Furthermore, the continued economic downturn threatens to exacerbate rather than relieve such dismal statistics.

It is true that such statistics lend towards a rather dismal view on the plausibility for the establishment of a “relational peace” anywhere in the DRC in the near future; the sense of the enormity of the task has already been captured throughout this thesis, particularly in the previous and final chapter where we turned to explore the struggle for peace in the contemporary landscape. Indeed, this sense of hopelessness was most powerfully captured through numerous responses given to a final question about the hope for a future vision and practice of *Búmùntù* (and thus the peace associated with it). Such responses included the following:<sup>131</sup> “hope (for a real peace) dwindles more and more,” “it has become impossible for the moment,” “it has become difficult because the behaviour of people is already destroyed,” “the (current) generation is rotten, only if God destroys it and creates another generation.” And yet, whilst drawing attention to the reality of this sense of hopelessness, it is not here that we will end. There were, other voices too.<sup>132</sup> They offered their own perspectives on the many pathways needed towards a peaceful DRC. Such a “real peace”, it was argued, can be achieved through the return to “the God of our ancestors,” the return to the foundation of “a life lived in society,” the return to a culture of dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflict, the return to a more equitable distribution of resources, the development of the value of unity, solidarity, fraternity applied to a national identity, the establishment of a real democracy and a fair and balanced justice system, the establishment of true self-determination at the political level where leaders are chosen by the people and act for the people, the restoration of a collective dignity as a people which can translate into respect for the dignity of others, the preservation of one’s own *Búmùntù* in cohabitation with their neighbor’s *Búmùntù*.

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<sup>131</sup> A more comprehensive collection of responses to this question is found in Appendix I: Responses on a Hope for the Vision and Practice of *Búmùntù* amongst future generations.

<sup>132</sup> Again, these can be found in Appendix I: Responses on a Hope for the Vision and Practice of *Búmùntù* amongst future generations.

Rather than a sense of “hopelessness,” then, such a dialogue, I suggest, has captured instead an *enduring* “spirit of discerning hope.”<sup>133</sup> In stark contrast to the representation of Congo as “inherently” violent and the idea that ongoing violence in the DRC is “normal” even in a peaceful Congo, I presented just one example (amongst the Luba peoples of Kamina) of the *endurance* of a local concept which appears to place the struggle for peace as a defining characteristic of “being,” or more precisely of “becoming” human. Through the collection of voices presented in this thesis, we have been offered an alternative vision of what is considered “normal” in a peaceful Congo, a vision of what I have framed as a “relational peace,” expressed also as “social harmony alongside human dignity for all, within a specific social and cultural milieu.” Of course, how individuals, families, communities and society as a whole have enacted and continue to enact the struggle for such a peace is incredibly complex and differs according to varying positionalities and the exigencies of different moments in time and space. And yet, despite the enormous challenges and complexities clearly present, the fact that *Búmùntù* endures and continues to offer a shared frame of reference through which individuals, families, communities and Luba society as a whole are able to critically reflect on their current lived experiences and strive towards a (sometimes more and sometimes less cohesive) vision of peace should not be underestimated. Rather than emphasizing *Búmùntù* as an inherently peace enhancing and maintaining concept that should be restored, revitalized and regenerated, I have offered another argument: that the potential of *Búmùntù* is in the onus it places on us to engage in the struggle to “become” authentically human. *Búmùntù*, I argue, invites dialogue and provides a shared frame of reference from which such a dialogue can take place. This is not a “finding” as such but more a “calling.” In my articulation of purpose, this thesis represents just one moment in the development of an ever-evolving story where “the meaning of any present story depends on the stories it will generate. One story calls forth another, both from the storyteller him or herself, and from the listener/recipient of the story. The point of any present story is its potential for revision and redistribution in future stories” (Frank 2005, p. 967).

It is my view that there are many more stories found within the pages of this thesis that are still waiting to be told. My choice to engage with the struggle for peace more broadly has

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<sup>133</sup> The notion of an “anchored in a spirit of discerning hope” draws from (Morley, Macfarlane & Ablette 2014).

naturally resulted in the identification of many tributaries, which although touched upon, are deserving of a much more comprehensive and concentrated examination. Whilst my desire to engage with the “*restless and unatoned bones*” has resulted in a heavy focus on the historical, this is not a work of historical anthropology. As such, although I have drawn on Mwamba’s notion of a “cross of life” and the assertion of an alternative “extraordinary” field accessed through the use of rituals, a more concentrated engagement with historical sources on Luba ontology and such rituals would no doubt enhance greatly our understanding of the historical meaning of such rituals and their evolution in the context of a rapidly changing ontological landscape. Such an historical engagement is also seen as important in expanding the exploration of *Búmùntù* and gender relations within this thesis. Whilst I have drawn attention to the tension between the dominant contemporary narrative on the “naturally inferior” positioning of women in Luba history and the articulation of the centrality of women and the ontological relationships amongst power, gender and spirituality found in literature on Luba history, there is still much scope for further exploration. Again, a more concentrated engagement of historical sources on Luba ontology and gender relations, as well as an examination of the literature pertaining to the profound impact of colonial education on local gender relations within the DRC more broadly would greatly enhance our understanding of the contemporary expressions of *Búmùntù* and gender relations presented here.

And there are many more examples of similar tributaries within this thesis to which I cannot draw attention individually. Instead I turn to the more fundamental “calling” found within this thesis: the question of how one might translate and apply the learnings from this relational and dialogical process to the actual struggle for peace in Kamina and the DRC more broadly. If, as I have argued, the powerful potential of *Búmùntù* is that it obliges a perpetual questioning, the “calling” forth naturally includes: how can this quality of *Búmùntù* be built upon and more proactively and consciously drawn upon, adapted, transformed for the purposes of peace? What structures are necessary to enliven further the dialogical processes *Búmùntù* calls for? What structures are necessary to ensure that all groups in society (including those experiencing marginalization, exclusion and “Other-ing”) can participate equally in such dialogical processes, so as to limit the potential of more violent/oppressive applications of *Búmùntù*? Evidently, the presence of the ethnic “Other” through the example of the Luba-Kasai has demonstrated the complexities of the application of *Búmùntù* to

promote peace across multi-ethnic communities even at the local level. Nevertheless, the fact that *Búmùntù* and its various equivalents across various ethnic groups throughout DRC and Africa more broadly do provide a shared frame of reference from which a dialogue can take place is suggestive of a rich resource for peace. I suggest that this thesis thus also calls for further exploration of the potential of *Búmùntù* and its equivalents at the broader national, regional and international levels.

Most of all, however, and beyond a specific focus on the emphasis on *Búmùntù*, I suggest that the thesis calls for the continued engagement with those “*restless and unatoned bones.*” Specifically, it calls that we, continue to seriously and systematically delve into the history of an *enduring struggle*; that we continue to open our eyes to the many evidences of this *enduring struggle* — which like all connectivities joining colonial pasts to postcolonial presents are “ineffably threaded through the fabric of contemporary life forms” (Stoler 2016, p. 5). More so, it requires that we take the opportunities presented by the profound shifts occurring as a result of the “decolonial turn;” where it is proposed that the modern foundation of knowledge is shifting from a theo- and ego- politics of knowledge applied as a universality to the geo- and body- politics of knowledge (Mignolo 2011). In line with the argument from de Sousa Santos (2014, p. viii); “there is no global social justice, without global cognitive justice.” Extending this further, I suggest that it is only through global cognitive justice, that we can find a “real peace.”

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: NOTICE OF APPROVAL — HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC)



Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)  
Research and Innovation office  
NH&MRC Code: EC00237

### Notice of Approval

Date: **20 March 2014**

Project number: **05/14**

Project title: ***Finding peace amongst restless and unatoned bones***

Risk classification: **More than low risk**

Investigator: **Dr Jonathan Makuwira**

Approved: **From: 20 March 2014 To: 31 December 2015**

#### Terms of approval:

**1. Responsibilities of investigator**

It is the responsibility of the above investigator to ensure that all other investigators and staff on a project are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure that the project is conducted as approved by HREC. Approval is only valid whilst investigator holds a position at RMIT University.

**2. Amendments**

Approval must be sought from HREC to amend any aspect of a project including approved documents. To apply for an amendment use the request for amendment form, which is available on the HREC website and submitted to the HREC secretary. Amendments must not be implemented without first gaining approval from HREC.

**3. Adverse events**

You should notify HREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.

**4. Plain Language Statement (PLS)**

The PLS and any other material used to recruit and inform participants of the project must include the RMIT university logo. The PLS must contain a complaints clause including the above project number.

**5. Annual reports**

Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an annual report.

**6. Final report**

A final report must be provided at the conclusion of the project. HREC must be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

**7. Monitoring**

Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by HREC at any time.

**8. Retention and storage of data**

The investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

**9. Special conditions of approval**

The application will be approved in stages, and subject to submission of progress reports and all relevant documents related to the research. It is noted that the first stage of the project will be concluded in June 2014 when the researcher completes a research visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A report on the stage will be submitted in July 2014. This will be considered by the Human Research Ethics Committee before further stages of the project will be undertaken.

In any future correspondence please quote the project number and project title above.

A/Prof Barbara Polus  
Chairperson  
RMIT HREC

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## APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



*SCHOOL OF GLOBAL, URBAN AND SOCIAL STUDIES  
RMIT UNIVERSITY  
GPO Box 2476, MELBOURNE, VIC 3001  
AUSTRALIA*

### INVITATION: participer d'un projet de recherche

**TITRE DE PROJET:** *TROUVER LA PAIX PARMIS LES OS AGITES ET NON EXPIES:  
La Mémoire du 'Bumuntu' et l'héritage de la violence coloniale au  
Katanga, en République Démocratique du Congo.*

**CHERCHEUSE PRINCIPALE:** *Mme Rene Sephton, L'Ecole des Etudes Mondiales, Urbaines et  
Sociales*

**SUPERVISEURS:** *Dr Jonathan Makuwira, et Dr June Allan,  
L'Ecole des Etudes Mondiales, Urbaines et Sociales*

Cher/e.....

Vous êtes cordialement invités à participer au projet nommé ci-haut qui est mené par l'Université RMIT, à Melbourne en Australie avec le soutien de l'Institut de la Paix Bumuntu et l'Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Kamina.

Comme un spécialiste reconnu dans le domaine, nous croyons que votre connaissance et votre expérience seraient de très grande valeur à ce projet et nous serions très reconnaissant pour vos contributions et conseils. Cette feuille d'information fournit des détails de l'étude et des idées de la façon dont vous pourriez être en mesure de contribuer. Si vous avez des questions, n'hésitez pas à nous demander. Si vous acceptez de participer à ce projet, je vous demanderai de remplir le formulaire de consentement qui est attaché pour indiquer votre acceptation de cette invitation.

Qui mène ce projet de recherche?

Mme Rene Sephton prépare son doctorat avec l'Ecole des Etudes Mondiales, Urbaines et Sociales, à l'Université RMIT. Ce projet est mené dans le cadre de sa thèse de doctorat et est supervisée par Dr. Jonathan Makuwira et Dr June Allan de l'Ecole des Etudes Mondiales, Urbaines et Sociales, à l'Université RMIT. Dr. Mutombo Nkulu N'Sengha du Département des Etudes Religieuses à l'Université d'État de Californie, aux États-Unis et Rev. Dr. Boniface Kabongo de l'Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Kamina sont également des consultants. Ce projet de recherche a été approuvé par le Comité d'Éthique de la Recherche Humaine de RMIT.

Quel est le thème de cette étude? Quelles sont les questions examinées?

Il y a trois buts de ce projet:

1. Documenter les visions et les pratiques traditionnelles de la paix, notamment en ce qui s'exprime à travers le paradigme «Bumuntu» de la tradition Luba.

2. Examiner l'héritage de la violence coloniale et de comprendre comment les «blessures» historiques peuvent avoir un impact de telles visions et pratiques de la paix.
3. Explorer la façon dont une telle compréhension peut contribuer à la consolidation de la paix.

De cette façon, nous espérons offrir un contre-discours aux discours dominants sur la violence au Congo, qui présentent souvent la violence comme une caractéristique «inhérente» au Congo et ses peuples. Au lieu de cela, ce projet vise à donner une voix aux concepts de paix et de l'humanité du contexte culturel Congolais, spécifiquement de la tradition Luba, et grâce à cela, contribuer à d'autres voies pour comprendre la violence et les approches de la consolidation de la paix.

Nous sommes déterminés à approcher cette recherche d'une façon qui sert le mieux le contexte local, nous aimerions vous inviter à partager vos idées sur comment ce projet peut être encadré pour mieux contribuer aux travaux en cours entrepris par vous et d'autres personnes en RDC.

Si vous acceptez de participer, qu'est-ce qui vous sera demandé de faire?

Essentiellement, nous aimerions commencer une conversation avec vous. Nous espérons que vous accepterez de nous rencontrer pour une consultation initiale. Ces interviews de consultation font partie de la phase préliminaire du projet de recherche qui nous aidera dans la planification de ce projet. Nous cherchons à tirer de vos connaissances riches l'aide pour façonner ce projet. Nous espérons:

- Commencer à développer les fondements théoriques (basés sur le paradigme «Bumuntu '») qui seront utilisés comme un cadre de cette étude.
- Tester des concepts et des thèmes pour la pertinence dans le contexte local.
- Déterminer les possibilités pour la pratique de la recherche collaborative.

Vous recevrez un aperçu des questions à l'avance et on déterminera un temps et un endroit convenables pour vous. Il est prévu que ces consultations prennent environ 1h. Si vous nous donnez votre permission, nous aimerions enregistrer l'audio de cette conversation.

Si vous êtes intéressé par ce projet et souhaitez continuer à participer au projet de recherche, nous serons ravis de poursuivre la conversation et les possibilités qu'un tel dialogue se produise sera discuté. On vous demandera également si vous avez des suggestions d'autres personnes qui travaillent dans le domaine et qui pourraient être intéressées pour participer.

Y a-t-il des risques associés à la participation?

Nous ne croyons pas qu'il y ait des risques associés à la participation, cependant si à tout moment vous avez des inquiétudes au sujet de votre participation, vous êtes invités à communiquer avec la chercheuse principale et discuter à propos de vos inquiétudes avec elle le plus tôt possible. Vous pouvez également vous retirer de l'étude à tout moment, y compris après la consultation, et les enregistrements ou les notes transcrites seront détruits.

Quels sont les avantages liés à la participation?

Nous sommes très reconnaissants de votre participation et espérons qu'il y aura des avantages pour vous aussi:

1. L'occasion de s'engager dans le dialogue et la réflexion sur vos expériences et idées pour la paix.
2. L'occasion de contribuer à la création des discours alternatifs sur le Congo et son peuple et de partager vos apprentissages sur la consolidation de la paix avec le monde.

Que se passera-t-il avec l'information que vous fournirez?

Si vous avez donné votre accord pour réaliser l'enregistrement audio, cet enregistrement sera

transcrit et analysé tout au long des interviews des autres participants pour consulter des thèmes et des idées.

Si vous le demandez, on peut vous procurer cette transcription pour que vous l'approuviez. Vous pouvez demander de rester dans l'anonymat ou vous pouvez demander d'être identifié et reconnu pour votre apport. Si vous choisissez de ne pas être identifié, toute information fournie pourra être révélée seulement si (1) c'est pour vous protéger ou protéger autrui, (2) si c'est spécialement demandé ou permis par la loi. Les transcriptions électroniques seront gardées en sécurité au RMIT Université 5 ans après leur publication, avant d'être détruites.

Les sujets traités des interviews de consultation peuvent montrer le bon chemin lors du développement d'un article journalier ou de conférence, qui sera partagé avec les participants pourvu qu'il soit publié. La thèse finale de doctorat sera disponible en ligne et dans l'entrepôt RMIT. Abrisant tout type d'articles de recherche, celle-ci est une bibliothèque en ligne accessible publiquement. Le chercheur aura également le but de publier les découvertes et les résultats obtenus de la dernière étude académique et/ou dans les revues. Les participants, s'ils le désirent, seront prévenus de telles futures publications.

On vous encourage aussi à partager vos idées à propos de comment l'information réunie tout au long du projet peut être utilisée et contribuer au travail qui est en cours dans le contexte local.

Quels sont mes droits en tant que participant?

- Le droit de retirer votre participation à tout moment
- Le droit de demander l'arrêt des enregistrements
- Le droit de faire retirer et détruire toutes données non traitées, pourvu qu'elles puissent être identifiées de manière fiable, et que, ce faisant, cela n'augmente pas les risques que prendra le participant.
- Le droit d'obtenir des réponses à vos questions à n'importe quel moment.

Qui dois-je contacter si j'ai des questions?

Si vous avez des questions, veuillez prendre contact avec Rene Sephton \*\*\*\*\* tout d'abord par téléphone ou e-mail. Vous pouvez aussi contacter Rev. Dr. Boniface Kabongo \*\*\*\*\* ou Prof. Mutombo Nkulu N'Sengha \*\*\*\*\*.

Cordialement,

Rene Sephton — Primary Researcher  
B.FA, *RMIT*; B.SW(Hons), *Latrobe*.  
PhD Candidate  
School of Global, Urban and Social Studies  
RMIT University  
[\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](mailto:*****)

Si vous avez des plaintes ou des préoccupations concernant votre participation à ce projet vous pouvez adresser vos plaintes à l'administrateur, Comité d'éthique de la recherche humaine de RMIT, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, VIC, Australie, 3001. Les détails de la procédure de plainte sont disponibles à l'adresse suivante: <http://www.rmit.edu.au/governance/complaints/research>. HREC No: EC00237 05/14

## APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM



SCHOOL OF GLOBAL, URBAN AND SOCIAL STUDIES  
RMIT UNIVERSITY  
GPO Box 2476, MELBOURNE, VIC 3001  
AUSTRALIA

### Formulaire de consentement

1. J'ai lu la feuille d'information, et j'ai compris le projet.
2. Je suis d'accord de participer au projet de recherche tel que décrit.
3. Je suis d'accord:
  - a. D'être interviewé
  - b. D'enregistrer ma voix
  - c. D'être identifié et reconnu dans les données et les rapports de recherche.
4. Je reconnais que:
  - (a) Ma participation est volontaire et que je suis libre de me retirer du projet à tout moment et de retirer toutes les données fournies auparavant mais non traitées.
  - (b) Le projet a pour but, la recherche. Il ne peut être un avantage direct pour moi.
  - (c) La confidentialité des renseignements personnels que je fournis sera garantie et ne pourront être divulgués qu'au cas où je consens, ou encore si cela est requis par la loi.
  - (d) La sécurité des données de recherche sera protégée pendant et après l'achèvement de l'étude. Les données recueillies lors de l'étude peuvent être publiées. Toute information qui m'identifie ne sera pas utilisée à moins que j'aie accepté (voir 3c ci-dessus).

#### CONSETEMENT DU PARTICIPANT

Participant:

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (2014)



SCHOOL OF GLOBAL, URBAN AND SOCIAL STUDIES  
RMIT UNIVERSITY  
GPO Box 2476, MELBOURNE, VIC 3001  
AUSTRALIA

### PROGRAMME D'INTERVIEW

*TROUVER LA PAIX PARMIS LES OS AGITES ET NON EXPIES: LA MEMOIRE DU 'BUMUNTU' ET L'HERITAGE DE LA VIOLENCE COLONIAL AU KATANGA, EN REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO.*

Ces entretiens de consultation viseront à tirer sur vos connaissances et votre expérience pour façonner ce projet. Les questions suivantes sont un guide des types de questions dont nous sommes intéressés. Les questions peuvent être développées et vos réponses peuvent inciter d'autres questions non cotées. Cependant, nous vous encourageons à apporter également vos idées et des thèmes que vous jugerez pertinents dans le dialogue.

Les types de questions qui seront traitées se répartissent en trois catégories, des exemples de ces questions sont:

1. Développer les fondements théoriques — une vision de la paix à travers le paradigme de Bumuntu.
  - Que signifie un être humain dans la pensée de Luba?
  - Quelle est l'origine de la violence humaine dans la pensée de Luba?
  - Que signifie la violence dans la pensée de Luba?
  - Que signifie la paix dans la pensée de Luba? Conformément au paradigme Bumuntu?
  - What proverbs/songs/stories speak to this vision?
  - Can violence be justified within the Bumuntu paradigm? or is it located elsewhere? Where?
2. L'importance de la l'histoire dans la compréhension de la violence au Katanga en, RDC.
  - A votre avis, pour comprendre la violence dans la société aujourd'hui, quelle l'importance de l'histoire?
  - Quelles sont les formes qu'a revêtu la violence pendant la période coloniale et celles qu'elle a eu pendant la période post-coloniale?
  - Selon vous, quel est l'impact de toutes ces formes de violence sur la vision et la pratique de Bumuntu?
  - A votre avis, croyez-vous que les mauvais esprits reviennent à la vie avec la possibilité de déranger les humains?
  - Si vous y croyez, cela peut-il être l'une des causes des violences?
  - Selon la pensée Luba, quelle est la relation entre le passé, le présent et le futur?

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (2015)



*SCHOOL OF GLOBAL, URBAN AND SOCIAL STUDIES  
RMIT UNIVERSITY  
GPO Box 2476, MELBOURNE, VIC 3001  
AUSTRALIA*

### PROGRAMME D'INTERVIEW

#### PARTIE 1: LES QUESTIONS THEORIQUE

1. Quant est-ce que on parle de l'histoire de la creation dans la pensee Luba ? Comment on peut comprendre la relatione entre l'etre humain et Dieu a travers cette histoire ? Comment on peut comprendre la relatione entre l'etre humain, entre les bons et les mals?
2. Il y a une salutation que nous utilisons souvent ici. 'Wakomapo' et les reponses 'Eyo Mwa' et 'Eyo Vidje.' Nous voulons savoir quel est la signification pour vous ?
3. Que signifie le Bumuntu ?
  - a. Quelles sont des qualite qu'on peut trouver dans les hommes qui a de Bumuntu?
  - b. Quelles sont des qualite qu'on peut trouver dans les femmes qui a de Bumuntu ?
  - c. C'était la meme pour les ancetres comme pour aujourd'hui ?
4. Comment nous pouvons comprendre 'la violence' a travers cette paradigme ?
  - a. Comment nous pouvons comprendre:
    - i. Deshumanisation
    - ii. Humiliation
    - iii. Chosification
5. Comment nous pouvons comprendre l'impact de la violence sur 'l'etre' a travers cette paradigme — pour la victime, pour l'auteur de la violence, et pour la communaute en generale ?
  - a. Y'as t-il un concept dans la pensee Luba qui peut correspondre avec l'idee de la traumatisme psycho-sociale, ou bien les blessures psycho-sociale ?
6. Comment nous pouvons comprendre 'la paix' a travers cette paradigme ?

## PARTIE 2 : LES QUESTIONS PROBLEMATIQUE

7. Nous avons compris que cette idee de Bumuntu c'est un ideal, c'est le model que tous nous allons essayer d'obtenir. Mais comme toujours quelque fois comme une societ nous pouvons suivre cette ideal et quelque fois ca peut etre un division entre l'ideal et la pratique. Maintenant nous voulons reflechir de la vie actuelle — dans la pratique. Dans votre experience de la vie ici a Kamina aujourd'hui, comment vous trouvez l'application de ces principes — Donnez-nous des exemples que vous voyez dans la vie quotidienne?
- a) Nous voulons reflechir particulièrement sur les aspects relationelle - la valorisation de l'autre etre humain, le respect pour la dignite humain des autres, l'obligation de toujours trouver l'harmonie avec les autres?
8. Maintenant nous voulons vous donner quelque proverbes — qui nous donne des conseils comment vivre dans la societ. Nous serons interesse d'entendre :
- a) La signification de ces proverbes
  - b) Et comment vous voyez l'application de ces proverbes dans la vie actuelle aujourd'hui.
    - i. « *Kudja Talala Ikwabana biya* » ou « *Kudja Talala Ikwabana mitanda* »
    - ii. « *Twayayi ibantu kashiku kobe ukojeja wende?* » ou « *Kasukwa kobe kabambwa kiyombo* »  
(Pour chaque chose, chaque circonstance il faut l'aide d'autres personnes seul tu ne sauras pas.
    - iii. « *Dyabutula ngulungu. Ki.mungu nandi ka.same butombe* »  
*Quelle animosity ! Tu veux nuire aux succes des autres.*
    - iv. « *Kankenge kamushi mukwenu wakulondele amba tushikate abe wamumona amba kemubika obe* »  
Quel qu'un te suis pour vivre avec lui mais toi tu le vois comme ton esclave
    - v. « *Kwa mukulu kikaiko ke kubulwe kikakutwala* »  
Il ne faut jamais negliger quel qu'un dans la societ, dans la communauté ou dans la famille »
9. Maintenant nous voulons vous donner quelques autres proverbes — qui nous donne des conseils un peu different. Encore, nous serons interesse :
- a) La signification de ces proverbe
  - b) Comment vous voyez l'application de ces proverbes dans la vie actuelle aujourd'hui.
  - c) Et aussi comment vous concilie ces idees avec l'idee de Bumuntu?

- i. « *Kula katwekobe kamukwenu ekaboyongolo* »  
*Chacun pour soi. Dieu pour tous* »
- ii. « *Kipongo babalayi letu ye kwa kipongo tukekudya ka?* “  
On n’as pas besoin d’aller chez le pauvre parce qu’il n’a rien
- iii. « *Mwana mukwenu uhika, kaulala ulala wahikula kutchina wakajibwa ne muswa* «

### PARTIE 3: LES QUESTIONS ANALYTIQUE

10. Quel sont les facteurs qui nous pousses a negliger les autres ou ne valoriser pas la dignite humain de chacun dans la societe, la communaute, ou dans la famille ? Quel sont les facteurs qui nous pousses a considerer les autres dans la societe, la communaute, ou dans la famille comme les autres etre humain comme mienne?
11. En 1945, le Père Placide Tempels, missionnaire Belge, et père fondateur du mouvement de l’ethnophilosophie écrivait: « nous avons pris une part de responsabilité pour avoir tué le ‘Muntu’ dans le Bantu ». <sup>134</sup> Qu’est ce que vous pensez de cette déclaration ? Est-il vrai que il y a une perdre du ‘Bumuntu’ dans l’ame Luba aujourd’hui? Si oui :
  - a. Quelles sont les facteurs dans l’histoire coloniale qui ont ‘tuer’ le ‘Bumuntu’ dans l’ame Luba ?
  - b. Quelles sont les autres facteurs dans l’histoire de Baluba en generale ?

### PARTIE 4 : LES QUESTIONS ASPIRATIONAL

12. Quand vous pensez de la Paix — quelle est votre espoir pour la vision et pratique de Bumuntu pour les generations future de Baluba, les autres Congolaise, et le monde en generale?

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<sup>134</sup> Tempels (1959)

## APPENDIX F: TABLE OF DIALOGUES

	Name	Title/Role	Date	Location
	PRIMARY FIELD TRIP — JUNE TO JULY 2014			
1	Odon Kitamba	Lawyer	21/06/2014	Kamina
2	Gilson Mwepu Kilume	Academic and Pastor	22/06/2014	Kamina
3	Pastor Kumwimba Mukishi	Pastor - Methodist Church; Descendent of the Royal Line	23/06/2014	Kamina
4	Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert	Professor at the University of Kamina (UNIKAM); Author of <i>Developper l'Espace Luba : Un Defi et une Tache Pour l'Association Socioculturelle Buluba Ibukata.</i> » (Developing the Luba space: a challenge and a task for the Association socioculturelle Buluba Ibukata)	25/06/2014 26/06/2014 28/06/2014 01/07/2014	Kamina
5	Rev. Boniface Kabongo Ilunga	Methodist Pastor and Director of the Institut Supérieure Pedagogique (ISP) of Kamina	27/06/2014	Kamina
6	Community Dialogues		28/06/2014	Village of Lukamvwe
7	Community Dialogues		28/06/2014	Village of Lukoka
8	The Notables of the Luba Royal Court	The Notables of the Luba Royal Court — *****	29/06/2014	Kinkunki
9	Longwa Banza Gary		30/06/2014 03/07/2014	Kamina
10	Community Dialogues		01/07/2014	GRELKA - Kamalenge

11	Community Dialogues		01/07/2014	GRELKA - Mwidie
12	Community Dialogues		01/07/2014	Village of Kasao
13	Community Dialogues		01/07/2014	Village of Katongola
14	Community Dialogues		01/07/2014	Village of Kitapa
15	Community Dialogues		01/07/2014	Village of Lumba
16	Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse	Local Elder, Intellectual; Author of "La Revelation: Vidye, Butobo et Bulopwe	02/07/2014	Kamina
17	Prof. Mutombo Nkulu N'Sengha and Longwa Banza Gary	Academic — Theology/African Religion/Philosophy	03/07/2014	Kamina
18	Ilunga Shimbi (and Longwa Banza Gary)	Male Diviner	04/07/2014	Kamina
19	Prof. Mbuya Mukombo	Professor at the University of Lubumbashi (UNILU) (Linguistics)	08/07/2014	Lubumbashi
20	Raymond Mande	Professor at the University of Lubumbashi (UNILU)	09/07/2014	Lubumbashi
SECONDARY FIELD TRIP — JULY TO NOVEMBER 2015				
21	Billy Ngoy Mishindo; Boshwaa Nkulu Kilumba; Mukanjila Wakidi Dany; Kabamba Ilunga Christian; Winard Mpongo Ilunga Ndalamba; .....	<i>Assistants a L'universite de Kamina (UNIKAM); L'Institut Superieur Pedagogique de Kamina (ISP) ; Enseignant a L'ISP; L'Universite de Malemba</i>	21/08/2015	Kamina

22	Billy Ngoy Mishindo ; Boshwaa Nkulu Kilumba ; Fabrice Ilunga ; Boniface Kabongo Ilunga; Dr Kashindi ; Prof. Kaboba Dr. Jeanne ; Banza Mpanga Alexis ; Veronique Kilumba Nkulu ; Madame Riquelle Pastor Kyenge ; Kishiko-Guillaume ; Papa Lukinda ; Papa Maloba ; Odon Kitapa	<i>Assistants et Professeurs a L'universite de Kamina (UNIKAM); L'Institut Supérieur Pedagogique de Kamina (ISP) ; Enseignant a L'ISP; L'Universite de Malemba ; Community Leaders ; Religious Leaders.</i>	24/08/2015	Kamina
23	Rev. Ilunga Kyenge Nsungu Guillaume Kishiko-Kadila Maloba Kayembe Waudru Billy Ngoy Mishindo Boshwaa Nkulu Kilumba	<i>Assistants a L'universite de Kamina (UNIKAM); L'Institut Supérieur Pedagogique de Kamina (ISP) ; Enseignant a L'ISP; L'Universite de Malemba</i>	26/08/2015	Kamina
24	Billy Ngoy Mishindo ; Boshwaa Nkulu Kilumba ; Mukanjila Wakidi Dany ; Kabamba Ilunga Christian ; Winard Mpongo Ilunga Ndalamba	<i>Assistants a L'universite de Kamina (UNIKAM); L'Institut Supérieur Pedagogique de Kamina (ISP) ; Enseignant a L'ISP; L'Universite de Malemba</i>	27/08/2015	Kamina
25	Rev. Ilunga Kyenge Nsungu; Mpongo Ilunga Ndalamba Winard ; Guillaume Kishiko-Kadila ; Banza Mpanga Alexis ; Veronique Kilumba Nkulu ; Maloba Kayembe Waudru ; Prof Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert ; Dr Kashindi ; Christian Kitotolo ; Mukanjila Wakidi Dany	<i>Assistants a L'universite de Kamina (UNIKAM); L'Institut Supérieur Pedagogique de Kamina (ISP) ; Enseignant a L'ISP; L'Universite de Malemba</i>	28/08/2015	Kamina

26	Véronique Kilumba Nkulu, Ruth Mwange, & Jeannette Kabwika Mitonga	Three community leaders from the <i>Synergie des organisations, initiatives et associations féminines</i> (SOIAF). ***** = Presidente ONG Action des femmes pour le développement et la protection des enfants AFEDEPE, Coordonnatrice synergie des organisations, initiatives et associations féminines SOIAF ***** = President of the NGO FAR ( <i>Femmes d'action pour le reveil</i> ) ***** = Coordonnatrice de L'ONGD Centre des abandonnés et de réintégration des enfants orphelins CAREO	30/08/2015	Kamina
27	Flory Sendwe	Chef de Bureau Contentieux (Licencie en Histoire)	02/09/2015	Kamina
28	Rev. Odette Makonga Kyakutala & Rev. Ilunga Mwepu Dikonzo Edmond	Husband and wife team; both Methodist Pastors; ***** is the Bursar of the United Methodist University of Kamina; Both have a master of Arts in Religious Study at Africa University;	03/09/2015	Kamina
29	Anon	Imam — from the Muslim Community	07/09/2015	Kamina
30	Prof Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert	Professor at University of Kamina (UNIKAM); Author of <i>Developper l'Espace Luba : Un Defi et une Tache Pour l'Association Socioculturelle Buluba Ibukata.</i> » (Developing the Luba space: a challenge and a task for the Association socioculturelle Buluba Ibukata)	01/09/2015 09/09/2015 16/09/2015	Kamina
31	Anon	Journalist	09/09/2015	Kamina
32	Women's Gathering at ONG Action des femmes pour le développement		10/09/2015	Kamina

	et la protection des enfants AFEDEPE ; Facilitated by *****			
33	Lenge-Watutu-Tela Lwamba Songe	Grand Chef	10/09/2015	
34	Kasongo Wa Ilunga Madeleine	Female Diviner	17/09/2015	Kamina
35	Community Dialogues	Men Women	18/09/2015 18/09/2015	Village of Lukamvwe
36	Community Dialogues	Men Women	18/09/2015 18/09/2015	Village of Ntala
37	Tata Amedée	Luba Cultural Centre	19/09/2015	Kamina
38	Majeur Ignace	Police	22/09/2015	Kamina
39	Nkamba Kalala Dav Adril	Luba Kasai Community Member	22/09/2015 29/09/2015	Kamina
40	Methodist Community Women's Gathering. Facilitated by *****		29/09/2015	Kamina
41	Véronique Kilumba Nkulu	Presidente ONG Action des femmes pour le developpement et la protection des enfants AFEDEPE, Coordonnatrice synergie des organisations, initiatives et associations feminines SOIAF	23/09/2015	Kamina
42	Gekaf Kabamba	President of the Luba Kasai Community	09/15	Kamina
43	Papa Ndala Papa Ngoy Papa Mbuya	Religious Leaders from <i>Bulopwe Bwamulao Wa Bana Banshi</i> (The Missionary Church of Mage for the Reunification and the Kingdom of Promise of the Children of this Land).	15/09/2015 25/09/2015 (Worship Service) 30/09/2015	Kamina & Kinkunki

44	Inabanza	Previously a Notable at Kinkunki	31/09/2015	Kamina
45	Nikolas Ngole Kalowa		03/10/2015	Kamina
46	Tata Amedée; Pierre Mbanga and Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte.	Luba Cultural Centre	03/10/2015 07/10/2015	Kamina
47	Community Dialogues incl. Chief Monga Mjandwe	Men Women	06/10/2015 06/10/2015	Village of Lweji
48	Community Dialogues incl. Chief Nkomba Milamba	Men Women	06/10/2015 06/10/2015	Village of Lunge
49	Community Dialogues	Men Women	06/10/2015 06/10/2015	Village of Ntumba
50	The Notables at the Luba Royal Court in Kinkunki	Kinkunki	08/10/2015 14/10/2015	Kinkunki
51	Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse	Local Elder, Intellectual; Author of "La Revelation: Vidye, Butobo et Bulopwe	09/10/2015 13/10/2015	Kamina
52	Prof. Phînées Yumba Musoya	Professor at University of Kamina (UNIKAM)	07/10/2015	Kamina
53	Maman Mireil; Papa Mande Musodi; Papa Tshikomba Mutombo; Papa Muanba; Behin Kabish; Frere Badi Katunangu; Maman Françoisie Mujinga Boma; Kabulo Deborah; Frere Akka Ilunga Ngoi; Maman Mujinga Celestine; Frere Aidar; Maman Manionga	Bahá'i Community	07/10/2015	Kamina
54	Community Dialogues incl. Chief Bondo Monga Kwenjeshi	Men Women	10/10/2015 10/10/2015	Village of Katongola

55	Community Dialogues	Men Women	10/10/2015 10/10/2015	Village of Mwidie
56	Community Dialogues	Men Women	11/10/2015 11/10/2015	Village of Seya
57	Community Dialogues incl. Chief Kamba Nakyo	Men Women	15/10/2015 15/10/2015	Village of Kamaungu
58	Community Dialogues	Men Women	16/10/2015 16/10/2015	Village of Lvoi
<p>Total no. of participants: 58+ (Community dialogues in the villages were held outdoors and were open for anyone to participate, it is therefore impossible to know the precise number of participants.)</p> <p>Total no. of dialogues: 80 (incl. individual, group, and community dialogues).</p>				

## APPENDIX G: THREE KEY FACETS OF BÚMUNTÙ

This document presents a collection of responses to the basic question; “what is the meaning of the term *Búmuntù*?” I have organized these into three key facets (although in the course of our dialogues, these three facets were weaved more fluidly throughout our dialogues).

<p>BÚMUNTÙ as the sacred and inviolable dignity of the human being.</p>	<p>BÚMUNTÙ as the ability to live in harmony with our fellow human beings.</p>	<p>BÚMUNTÙ as the ability to live in harmony within society or within a specific social and cultural milieu (adherence to culture/customs/societal expectations).</p>
<p><i>“Búmuntù: is the value of the human being alike his God, his Creator.”</i></p> <p><i>(Anon, dialogue #31, September, 2015)</i></p> <p><i>“Búmuntù signifies the human dignity inherent in the being « Muntu, » this is to mean the ensemble of human values of the “Muntu.” Note that the human character is sacred for each “Muntu,” this is to say without distinction of sex, or territory.”</i></p> <p><i>(Prof. Phînéés Yumba Musoya, dialogue #52, October, 2015)</i></p>	<p><i>“Búmuntù, this is to mean the way to live socially with other people. It is not division. Here, amongst the Baluba, it is to live in harmony with others, in peace with others. This is Bumuntu.”</i></p> <p><i>(Rev. Ilunga Mwepu Dikonzo Edmond, dialogue #28, September, 2015)</i></p> <p><i>“Búmuntù can be a woman or a man who embodies the value...the value of the current life, of everyday life....the person who embodies this value he/she lives that what we call Búmuntù. Therefore humanism in his/her way of living. Those things which are capable of transmitting to future generations, those things which foster an atmosphere of peace and joy with others.....the person who respects also the rights of others and</i></p>	<p><i>“Búmuntù is the personality of the individual. And this personality is linked to the identity of the man in the society.”</i></p> <p><i>(Gilson Mwepu Kilume, dialogue #2, June, 2014)</i></p> <p><i>“Búmuntù is first and foremost, someone with value. It is someone who maintains the customs.”</i></p> <p><i>(Ruth Mwange, dialogue #26, September, 2015)</i></p> <p><i>“Búmuntù is the value of the human being.....what he has as quality, as character,</i></p>

<p><i>“Muntu I Kipangwa kya Vidye” (a human being is a divine creature), and in this sense reflects, to a greater or lesser degree, its Creator ‘Shakapanga’ (Father of Creation or God).”</i></p> <p><i>(Notables of the Luba Royal Court, dialogue #50, October, 2015)</i></p>	<p><i>who is also respected by others by his/her way of life.”</i></p> <p><i>(Jeannette Kabwika Mitonga, dialogue #26, September, 2015)</i></p> <p><i>“Búmùntù means the knowhow to be, and the knowhow to live in the society. Here, when one says “I muntu” (he is a human being), it means this is someone with a good character, who knows how to live with others. If you don’t have Búmùntù, you are considered someone who is not social, you are no longer Muntu. One can even consider you (in a pejorative sense) “Kintu” (a thing). But a “Muntu” is a being, a being who must adapt, who must create peace with others, create a movement of life)”</i></p> <p><i>(Longwa Banza Gary, dialogue #4, June-July, 2014)</i></p> <p><i>“Búmùntù, is the personality — the personality of someone. This signifies the way of integrity of someone in the society. Therefore someone who has this personality, must know how to live in society. This is to mean share with others. To seek out peace with the community. To be respectable. To be just.”</i></p> <p><i>(Gekaf Kabamba, dialogue #42, September, 2015)</i></p>	<p><i>which responds to the requirements of the society. This is the one who is the Bumuntu.”</i></p> <p><i>(Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte, dialogue #46, October, 2015)</i></p> <p><i>“Búmùntù: it translates into “real man or a man of truth” who respects himself, respects others and respects the “CULTURE” without distinction of social rank.”</i></p> <p><i>(Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse, dialogue #51, October, 2015)</i></p> <p><i>“Búmùntù is the knowhow to live. The knowhow to live in society.”</i></p> <p><i>(Notables of the Luba Royal Court, dialogue #50, October, 2015)</i></p>
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	<p><i>“Kwikala ne Búmùntù” This is to say — you must have purely human behavior, to live humanism, to behave in a humane way. It is not to treat your fellow human beings in a violent manner. In an inhumane manner. It is a recommendation. It demands of everyone to live humanism, to be on good terms with everyone, to understand everyone. You must have pro-social behaviour, be approachable, to have dignified behaviour, to be acceptable, to be admirable. It is a recommendation to live like this, to be truly human, to be truly responsible, to have a dignified conduct, to be an exemplary.”</i></p> <p><i>(Flory Sendwe, dialogue #27, September, 2015)</i></p>	<p><i>“Búmùntù is an ensemble of many characteristics, many works. Think of it to mean that this is the right way to live, and he who has no Búmùntù has a bad way to live. Here someone who has bad way, it has no place.”</i></p> <p><i>(Tata Amedée, Luba Cultural Centre, dialogue #46, October, 2015)</i></p>
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## APPENDIX H: PROVERBS

This document presents a collection of proverbs which were collected during my preliminary field trip to Kamina in 2014. Individuals and communities were directly asked for proverbs which “capture” the vision of peace associated with *Búmùntù*. Some of these were later used in order to provoke dialogue about the struggle for such a peace in the contemporary landscape.

Twayayi ibantu kashiku kobe wa enda?

Pour chaque chose, chaque circonstance il faut l’aide d’autres personnes, seul tu ne sauras pas.

Bakupa abe wasaka, bakapa mukwenu konyengela dikoshi panyuma kopele.

Quand on te donne quelque chose tu es content mais quand on donne à quelqu’un d’autre tu n’es pas content.

Tutulututu akwase adimunda mobe a kutupe kadi adi munda mobe.

Popopopo, si il y’a un problème la conscience va te rapprocher.

Upange kilubi mutaka nobe kodi kilubi

Lorsque tu chasse un fou nu et toi tu te déshabille toi aussi tu deviens fou.

Katungulu peyombo : Kufyamine undjuka ?

On ne se moque pas de quelqu’un aussi longtemps qu’il y a ceux qui se moquent aussi de vous.

Katungulu kokasepa kamenwa batweboso muntapa ya Kiluwe

On ne se moque pas de quelqu’un enfant que vous n’avez rien.

Muntwabene kakombwa kakamwa benyi nanchake badi bwa biyombo nancha kebadi bwa michi muntanda

Une femme mariée a toujours été accueillante malgré sa fatigue.

Kulupila kobe kwa tutu le batwila — Kulupila kobe kwa tutu batwila le batwa kebi lala ?

Espère ce que tu as mais ne pas espérer du grand frère ou d’autrui.

Twayahi ibantu le kachiku kobe ubwanya ?

Alors c’est les gens toi seul tu ne dois pas réussir.

Bakuta baya abeaba munomwetu kemudipo milundu ?

Quand les autres travaillent toi tu es là, les regardant ?

Wasongele kumvi katumbe ? Kekutumbe ko wa leulwile.

Le propriétaire ne s’en sert pas mais l’héritier s’en sert.

Wapele konyi kadya kendelela, shiwapele muntu longa Udyawilanga.  
Si tu donne l'oiseau à manger il s'en vole pour du bon mais si tu donne à l'homme il va se rappeler de toi.

Kashe kashe tudila kuwana abe kosake kantanfune komukondo  
on se partage petit pour se suffir.

Kankenge kamushi mukwenu wakulondele amba tushikate Abe wamumona amba kemubika  
obe.  
Quel qu'un te suis pour vivre avec lui mais toi tu le vois comme ton esclave.

Kipongo babalayi letu ye kwa kipongo tukekudya ka?  
Il ne faut jamais négliger quel qu'un dans la société, dans la communauté ou dans la famille.

## APPENDIX I: RESPONSES ON A HOPE FOR THE VISION AND PRACTICE OF BÚMUNTÙ AMONGST FUTURE GENERATIONS

This document presents just some of the many responses arising from an aspirational question, often posed as the final question of our dialogues: “In thinking about peace, what is your hope for the vision and practice of *Búmuntù* amongst future generations of Baluba, of other Congolese, and others in the world more broadly?”

### Theme 1: Hope Dwindles

“As for true peace in this country, hope dwindles more and more”

(Ilunga Kimilundu Wafika Tharcisse, dialogue #51, October, 2015).

“It has become impossible for the moment.”

(Village of Ntumba (Mixed), dialogue #49, October, 2015)

“The (current) generation is rotten, only if God destroys it and creates another generation.”

(Village of Katongola (Women), dialogue #54, October, 2015)

### Theme 2: Cultural/Spiritual Revival

“We must bring back the God of our land, the God of our ancestors, and when we return to this God of our ancestors, and we pray to this God, he will send us everything we need, there will be a transformation, there will be joy, and everyone will forget.”

(*Bulopwe Bwamulao Wa Bana Banshi*, dialogue #43, September, 2015)

“We must return to our culture. But not completely, because of all that which has already changed. But we must make a recourse to our traditions to give the foundation of a life lived in society. If we can make use of our culture, we will find a way to balance so that this way of a life lived in society is not permanently disturbed.”

(Notables of the Luba Royal Court, dialogue #50, October, 2015)

### Theme 3: Unity/Sharing/a Culture of Dialogue

“My opinion on peace? There is reason to hope, we should not be pessimistic. Peace can come back. Especially here on the Luba terrain. Peace can reign. But there are conditions. If we openly embrace the culture of dialogue, mutual understanding, peaceful resolution of conflict and equitable sharing or negotiated sharing. If this culture could be revived, peace can come back. Otherwise, we will wait for more violence.”

(Prof. Phînéés Yumba Musoya, dialogue #52, October, 2015)

“We must teach our people, our children, to love the nation. It is a question that all the different peoples who are in this country, that they can understand that we are all together. It is for the good of our country, we must all build it together. It takes time, it requires an evolution of the mind, it demands an education, it demands training. So that we can have a new mindset of this unity. It will also be necessary to have a real democracy established in this country. Because with a real democracy, we will have an equitable sharing of our wealth. If one can have an equitable sharing of our wealth, then the problem of jealousy could greatly diminish. It will also be necessary to have a real justice. A fair, and balanced justice system. It is through this that we can make a nation. And that peace could be established.”

(Gekaf Kabamba, dialogue #42, September, 2015)

#### Theme 4: Political Change/Political Self Determination

“I would not be pessimistic to say that peace is impossible. But today, in my opinion, what we live, the lack of peace that we live, continues to persist because of the system set up by the West. In our time, let us say, in the era of the Baluba, when there was a threat of peace, we would be gathered around the fire to settle our disputes. This was not with weapons. But rather it was through wisdom and through words that our differences would be settled. But today with the introduction of weapons, it is different. After all, to have peace the West said: “If you want peace, prepare for war.” But if today we return to our own system, because the chief for the Muluba, he is not only a chief, but he is a father. He is the embodiment of authority. When he is here everyone submits. When he is here everyone feels secured. When he is here we have the solution to the problem. We never sought to dethrone a father. We never tried to fight a father. That is the nucleus around which peace turns for the Muluba. The Muluba thinks that true peace is in the reorganization of his own system. But, if we continue to walk with this other system, the leaders that today you (the West) have given us, whom we are expected to call father when we do not recognize this quality in them. Here, we will rise up against them all the time!”

(Nikolas Ngola Kalowa, dialogue #45, October, 2015)

#### Theme 5: Cultural Revival/Cultural Exchange/Cultural Respect

“This vision here, this hope for peace is still very complicated, because of all that we have discussed that has caused the Muluba to lose the *Búmùntù*. To return to his values it has become a bit complicated. But the hope that is there is that the Muluba must take what is of value in his culture and take also what is of value in the foreign culture and to amalgamate these. And in doing this, he must seek first his own dignity and then when he has found his own dignity, he is also able to look for the dignity of others and seeking the dignity of others starting from peace within the house between dad, mom, and children, this can extend, with the neighbors also. And then from the neighbors it can extend around all of Kamina. And then from Kamina, out

into the province. And from the province, out into the country. And from the country, to the continent. And like that it can extend.”

(Lwala Kazadi Hypolyte, dialogue #46, October, 2015)

“A people without culture, is a people without a soul. How can a people live without their culture. It is a lie. So, I believe that if every people, throughout the world, every people must preserve their *Búmùntù* in cohabitation with their neighbor's *Búmùntù*.

This is the hope for a lasting peace.”

(Prof. Mwembo Lumbila Ngoie Robert, dialogue #30, September, 2015)