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N'DJILI/KINSHASA (1952-2012): LOCAL SPIRIT, PENTECOSTAL SPIRIT AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE. TRANS-LOCAL TRANSLATIONS

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Abstract

A trans-local ethnographic approach between N'djili/Kinshasa and different locations abroad provides access to a trans-historical approach of social transformations initiated through the prism of the "Spirit of Pentecost", diffracting the space into a multitude of "places" of belonging. It also raises awareness of a dual challenge of deterritorialization - in terms of exiting localism and ethnicity - and reterritorialisation in terms of anchors, very localized but interconnected. From local spirituality to the Spirit of Pentecost and Spiritual Warfare against territorial spirits, the aim of this contribution is to show a process of trans-localization, fighting to cross the borders of territoriality and ethno-nationality. The Spirit of Pentecost appears to give a good opportunity trying to leave territory, ethnicity, and discriminations due to corporeality.

Keywords: Trans-locality, mobility, belonging, prophetism, pentecostalism, spiritual warfare, dynamic of identities, ethnicity, territoriality, social transformations.

A trans-local ethnographic approach (2010-2012) - between the city of N'djili/Kinshasa and different locations (Paris, Liege, Geilenkirchen, Lausanne) of *bana* N'djili (people from this city) - provides access, through collected testimonies, to a trans-historical approach of social transformations initiated through the prism of what I call the "Spirit of Pentecost". It has the status of a signifier and it saturates the space with the signified to the point of diffracting it into a multitude of "places" of belonging. The migration situation is heuristic in that it lets us see the geographical and social mobility brought by the "spiritual struggles". It also raises awareness of a dual challenge of deterritorialization - in terms of exiting localism and ethnicity - and reterritorialisation in terms of anchors, very localized but interconnected.

But what makes the city of N'djili heuristic?

N'djili, a suburban territory created under the status (1954) of "centre extra-coutumier" (CEC) but set up since 1952 on the outskirts of Leopoldville (de Saint-Moulin, 1970), near the international airport also under construction at that time, is the meeting point for what I call "local practices" of the Spirit and the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit that stems from missionary Pentecostalism. In Kinshasa, N'djili became the focus of expansion of a triangulation process between internal and external movement, the third term of the triangulation consisting of Protestant covers: Baptists, Salvationists, Swedish evangelicals who experienced Pentecost in Sweden. This story of the Spirit of Pentecost is not sitting well with traditional Protestant circles who are reluctant to integrate this turbulent biblical data that passes through the body to express itself.

The original plan of N'djili - 7 districts spirally arranged from left to right - is a rather enigmatic imaginary projection and is in itself an operative *genius loci* (spirit of place). For the

people, "it is the Ixelles map," a Brussels commune where the Matonge district developed, a postcolonial avatar of Matonge/Kinshasa setting, no far from the place where the colonial institutions were located. There is this mixed awareness to live on "another one's plan", i.e. "the Belgian", in close connection with Europe. All imaginary projections are permitted, especially as the international airport of N'djili (under construction during the 50s) was a source of employment for many N'djilois who monopolized the territory, a platform at the junction between heaven and earth, between hell (li. *lifelo*) and paradise (li. *lola*), between Africa and Europe, the place of contact and traffic par excellence between the visible and invisible world (De Boeck & Plissard, 2005).

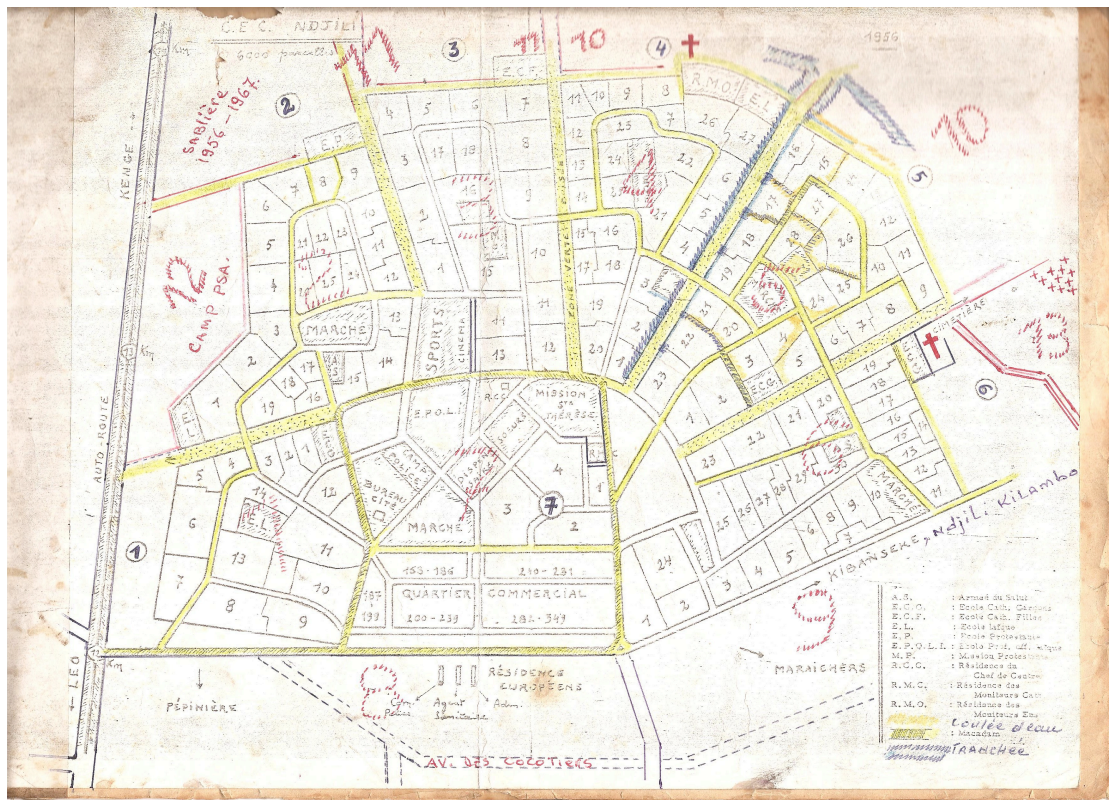


Illustration 1: "Old Ndjili" Plan (7 districts) ©Vieux Jeff Archives (ca 1960s)

The plan of N'djili was probably designed by Scheut missionaries who established the first Catholic parish (St. Teresa) in N'djili (Madimba & Manisa, 1994: 40-41)¹. This plan (cf. illustration 1) evokes the seven mansions of the mystical quest of St. Teresa of Avila (de Heusch, 2006, pp. 102-103). In this quest, the merger with "God" - the Spirit, the great Other, but also the "White" in local imagination - is fraught with difficulty by the legions of demons, snakes and other reptiles that inhabit the first neighborhoods and ensure that the mystical journey gets thwarted. This plan also territorializes the social and racial colonial categories, with the houses of the Belgian civil servants (Head of CEC 'RAT/représentant de l'autorité tutélaire', medical agent, and police agent) out of the 7 districts and with panoptical perspective.

The site called St. Teresa, a vast esplanade of sand located in district 7 (cf. illustration 2), has hosted many itinerant evangelists such as American T. L. Osborn in 1969 or the German Reinhart Bonnke and his "mobile tent" in 1986, to name just two. This place of St. Teresa is called 'a cathedral in the open air' in the words of Salvationists (Zana Etambala, 2005). The second post of the Salvation Army in Kinshasa is located in N'djili district 2 since 1954. The site of St. Teresa can be seen as a nodal point, a large interchange and a knot of traffic of all kinds - good and bad spirits, goods, transports, dollars (Hüwelmeier, Krause, 2010). To complete the picture, district 7 was the neighborhood of the "advanced", archetypal colonial category, based on the level of education and degree of assimilation of Western morals (Mutamba, 1998; Mulumba, 2007).

¹ About the self-contained satellite towns towards the east of Leopoldville, uncoordinated choices and an overall laissez-faire policy regarding urban planning (Ricquier, Heymans, Henrard), cf. Beeckmans, L. (2009, pp. vi-ix). The hypothesis (both *emic* and *etic*) of a plan self designed by Scheut missionary (Paul Van den Bosch) in N'djili St. Teresa is also supported by Paul Raymaekers (1960; 1975) who lived in the city of Matete from 1956 to 1960 and played a role in African scouting in N'djili (Individual statement, Rhode-Saint-Genèse, September 6, 2013).

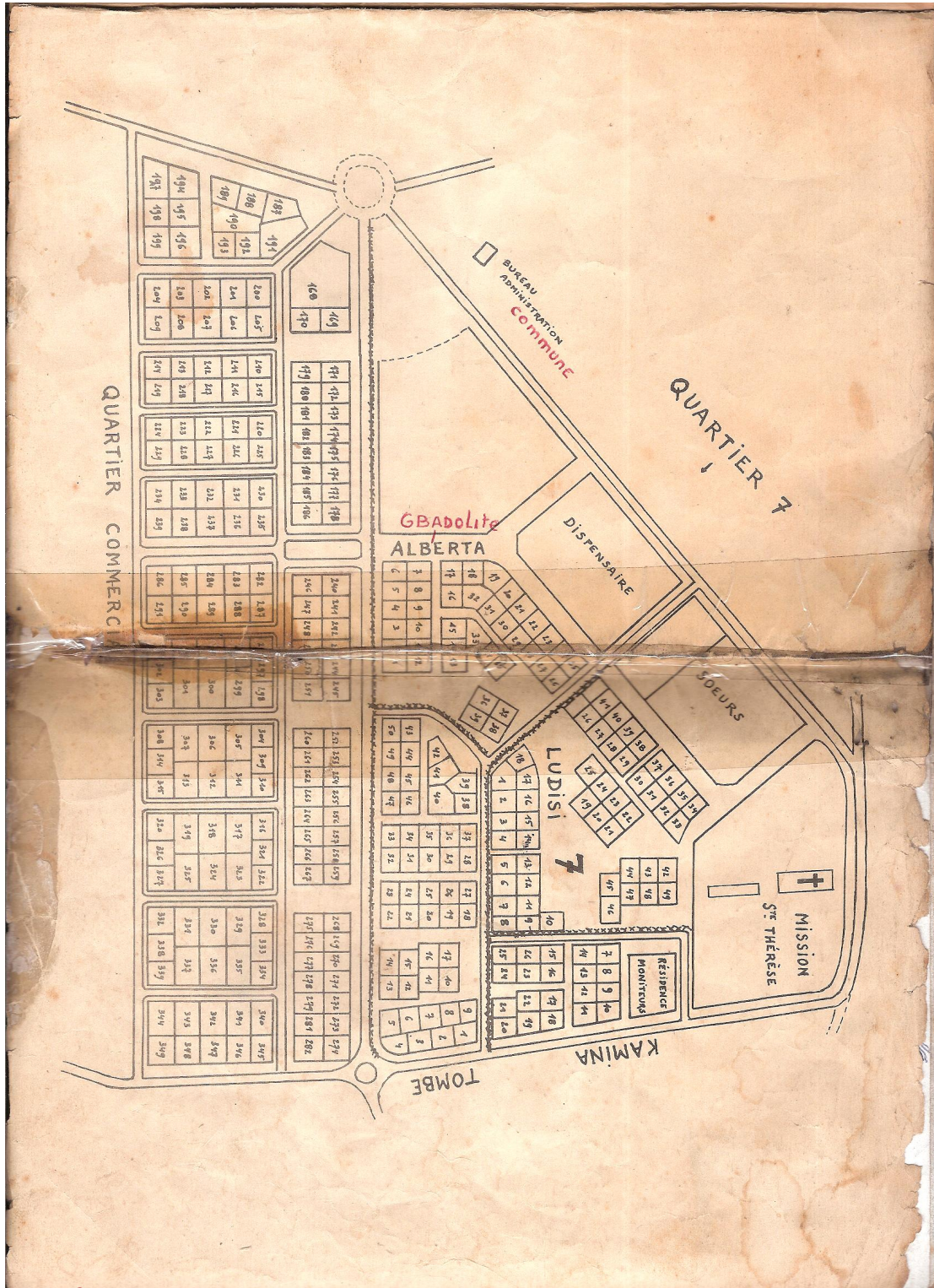


Illustration 2: District 7 ©Vieux Jeff Archives (1956)

Local practices of the Spirit in the 1950s

The stories of *bangunza* (prophets) found in N'djili indicate that they are the result of spatio-temporal shifts in affiliation with a series of prophetic figures since Kimpa Vita: 1921 Pentecost connected to Simon Kimbangu (Mélise, 2011), 1946 Pentecost connected to *Nzambi na Mapapu* (God with wings) of Simão Toko (Grenfell, 1998; Blanes, 2009, 2010) and the *kintwadi* period (1952 to 1959) in N'djili when kimbanguists and ngunzistes were united in clandestineness (even after the so called 'tolerance' decree in 1956). From *kintwadi* - "a religious concept to signify union and solidarity" as one of the definitions given to me - to the churches *Mpeve A Nlongo and bangunza* today, a multitude of churches of the Spirit (Bernard, 1970; Devisch, 2011) have proliferated in the wake of the official kimbanguist church (EJCSK) dissent². If these practices territorialize spirituality and involve an urban form of 'ethni-city', they also help to become aware of the existence of a hidden space in the lining of reality: local practices of the Spirit spread from house to house, were repressed, and suggest the existence of a "marranique space", in the words of Serge M'Boukou (2010) that establishes a correspondence between biblical messianism and Kongo prophetism. The so called 'Spirit of Pentecost' is the subject of a prohibition linked with the prejudicial question of trances, which is precisely the medium or channel through which pass all transgressions of the established order.

Here is what tells an old N'djili dad living in Belgium since 1974, regarding the "Spirit questioning the spirits," in the words of Masamba ma Mpolo (Congolese Baptist pastor and theologian well known in the 1970s and 1980s; cf. 1976 & 2002):

"We were arrested in 1957 [he was 17 and lived N'djili district 3] because we prayed in secret. Pentecostalism ... home we called it *kingunzisme*, the movement of the Spirit that the Swedes had brought to Manianga; well, when we arrived in Kinshasa, we made sure

² EJCSK (Église de Jésus-Christ sur la terre par le prophète Simon Kimbangu) recognized in 1959 (Raymaekers, 1975).

that this solidarity was expressed through a religious concept, *kintwadi* (...) So we were evangelical but not in the conventional sense. We were, one might say, a Pentecostal and Africanist trend. Having the idea that sooner or later, God would hear us, as Simon Kimbangu had claimed: one day we would become independent, there would be liberation. (...) That is to say that the people were filled with the Holy Spirit, they went into trances and began to speak other tongues. However, trances and tremors weren't accepted, either by Baptists or the Salvation Army. And this is what became a problem (...) But when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you shake, go into trances, it is biblical, and you can prophesy, heal the sick ... And this is not theory or hearsay. I experienced it. I did. (...)" (Papa Abel Lukuamusu, Mons, 21 June 2012).

These prophetic or healing churches, as Renaat Devisch (2000, 1996) called them, today claim for national recognition. Not far from the site of St. Teresa, in N'djili district 6, is the temple of the Spiritual church of the prophets of Holy Spirit inspiration (ESPISE³) founded in 1972 on the basis of a federation effort on the part of the 104 communities of the Holy Spirit that have proliferated after the dissolution of *kintwadi* in 1959. The corner stone of ESPISE is Simão Toko (cf. illustrations 3 & 4), who came back for a prophetic crusade in Kinshasa after the Independence of Angola (1974).

³ Église spirituelle des prophètes d'inspiration du Saint-Esprit (ESPISE).



Illustration 3: EPISE, Ndjili District 6, 2012©Meiers Bénédicte



Illustration 4: Simão Toko in Memoriam©Meiers Bénédicte

Simão Toko, founder of the tokoïste Church in Angola (Grenfell, 1998; Blanes, 2009, 2010), played the role of a charismatic leader in Leopoldville from 1943 to 1949 and left his mark in the minds of the Congolese after his arrest. The ESPISE is now part of the High Council of Churches of the Holy Spirit in Congo (ESEC) and *bangunza*¹, a platform of 250 congregations led by apostle Ignace Tambu Lukoki, president of an International congregation (EFAI/Foi Audacieuse Internationale). The spiritual references mobilized and stored by Lukoki are St. Ignatius of Loyola, Adini Abala of FEPACO/*Nzambe Malamu*, T.L. Osborn, and the apostle Nkelani, coming from ngunzisme and Swedish Evangelicals (SMF/Svenska Missionförbundet) to Assemblies of God Pentecostalism (EPC/CADC, affiliated to ECC/Église du Christ au Congo). Lukoki has a nodal position in the relationship between endogenous spirituality and exogenous evangelization. He said in an interview: "If you do not speak one speak you. The *bangunza* have the Holy Spirit and I have the ministry of the Word" (at home, Motel Fikin, 1^{er} octobre 2012). He embodies the junction between the two wings and tries to bring the prophets (*bangunza*) out of their "localism" by being their spokesman, and by making the connections with the international. By following the spiritual filiations on the ground we can say that, obviously, there is interdependence between mobility and faith (Pype, Mélice, Van Wolputte, 2012). But the problem remains to show how faith and mobility concretely articulate and which paths to follow on the ground, trans-locally speaking.

¹ Haut Conseil des Églises du Saint-Esprit au Congo (ESEC) et *bangunza*.

Regarding missionary Pentecostalism

The apostle Nkelani, whose maternal grandmother was baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1921, who was trained by Swedish Evangelicals before becoming a "servant of God" for the Community of Assemblies of God in Congo (CADC), the first Pentecostal church formalized in 1965 under the first name of Pentecostal Church in Congo (EEPC) and located in N'djili district 3, said:

"(...) As soon as you started to shake, the Belgians did not like it! They thought you were rebels. Trances were not allowed. The gospel was stifled. We were prevented from preaching the full gospel. In 1961, we had a conflict with the Presbyterians (...) we wanted to state that we were evangelical and we left the place to settle down a little further, on the field next door. We began to preach Pentecost ourselves (...)" (Kinshasa, Kigoma, March 2011).

What happened? The Presbyterian mission of Leopoldville - whose implementation territory, so far, was Kasai – granted a missionary to the Protestants of N'djili who met on their own initiative; they founded the Presbyterian Church of Kinshasa [EPK acronym, current CPK / Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa] in N'djili district 3. Quickly it got ridden by internal tensions around the notion of baptism – the Presbyterians did not recognize either baptism by immersion or baptism in the Spirit – and about the language of service – kikongo or tshiluba? – although Bakongo and Bazombo still represented 79,4% of the N'djili population in 1967 (de Saint Moulin, 1970, p. 307), probably more during the 50s, and lingala becoming the lingua franca. The American missionary in charge may have had this unfortunate sentence: "God does not hear the prayer of Mukongo, he speaks only Tshiluba", a phrase to be interpreted in the political context of ethno-regional ownership of the capital of Congo on the brink of independence. When Bakongo and Baluba met in the urban competition in Kinshasa, it overflowed at church level. A leadership conflict was also simmering under these tensions.

Finally, all the Bakongo withdrew and went to get the Swiss missionary (of Huguenot origin) Jacques Vernaud (son of Gaston Vernaud; cf. Mebiame Zomo, 2007), then stationed in Brazzaville for the Assemblies of God of France. Jacques Vernaud moved to Kinshasa in 1964. A second protagonist joined him in 1968, the American missionary William Lovick. From francophone Vernaud to anglophone Lovic (from EEPK to CADC/CADZ) a new generation of interpreters of God was born. The tandem formula (illustration 5) was taking place: a foreign missionary or an evangelist and a Congolese man of God speaking lingala (*lingua franca* in Leopoldville/Kinshasa and in the Congolese Diaspora) and trained in the same movement of translation/interpretation.



Illustration 5 Missionary Jacques Vernaud and Interpreter Jean-Baptiste Pindi©Pastor Vakambi Archives (CADC Ndjili).

This tandem situation is a particularly favorable arrangement for meaning transfer operations. Especially that in 1968 was grafted, always on this core of N'djili district 3, a third protagonist, Congolese prophet Adini Abala, spiritual son of Osborn since Kampala, who played a decisive role. This caused the cabal of a rapt of devotee in the wake of the success of Osborn's campaign and Adini Abala founded FEPACO²/*Nzambe Malamu* (God is good), second wing of Pentecostalism in Congo-Kinshasa (Fischer, 2011).

Trans-locating the Spirit of Pentecost

This outbreak of Pentecostalism then generated a cascade of affiliations whose spiritual sons can be traced to Europe, first in Paris (cf. Demart, 2010, pp. 297-298, 301-302, 387; Ngudiankama, 2002)³ but also in Switzerland⁴ (Bagalwa, 2007) and Deutschland⁵ where the issue of language of God rose again, becoming the stigma of ethno-national belonging and racial discrimination. This question of the language of God opened the issue of spirituality as a source of ethnicity and discrimination. Even though from an internal perspective (*emic*), "speaking in tongues" (glossolalia) emerged as a desire and an opportunity to exit ethnicity and corporeality. Spirit of Pentecost appears to be a key referent for a trans-historic and trans-local perspective on identities and recognition, on belonging, anchors and mobility; such a diachronic perspective on

² Fraternité évangélique de Pentecôte en Afrique et au Congo.

³ Pioneers coming from N'djili (Individual statements 2011): Emmanuel Botolo (1983, Assemblée évangélique "Le Rocher", joined by Félicien Mas Miangu); Félix Simakaka Baleta (1984, AFPC/Assemblée des fidèles aux prières chrétiennes; 1985, church Bethel-AEFPC/Assemblée évangélique Foi vivante et Paix en Christ), Emmanuel Yim Mayika Mayimona (1988, MEZA/Mission évangélique zaïroise; deceased 2007; joined by Jacques Matina Tutekazola et Malusala-Malu, église Source de vie).

⁴ Apostles Robinson Nkanza (African Evangelical Mission Carrefour pour Christ/CPC, Lausanne) and Lebo Nkanza (Neuchâtel). In Switzerland (1983) after 3 years in Paris; sons of Philibert Nkanza Matondo, 2e pastor of CADC N'djili Q.3, called the 'Patriarch' (56 years of ministry in 2012; individual statements). He comes from Baptists Missions, but was baptized in the Spirit in Kindamba (Congo-Brazza) in 1963 (cf. Coyault, 2007).

⁵ Jimmy Manzay (former president of bana N'djili Liège), pastor (since 2008) of 'Église Pentecôte de Jésus-Christ Les Vrais Adorateurs' (both in Liege/Belgium and Geilenkirchen/Deutschland, crossing the former borders between Belgium, The Netherlands and Deutschland).

transformations in the identifications lacking in Barth's pioneer theory of ethnicity (Martiniello, 2013, p. 61).

These 'men of God' circulating outside institutional Pentecostalism and trans-locating the Spirit of Pentecost opened a second track in the awakening of Pentecost, decisive for further developments of spiritual awakening from Kinshasa. It was marked by the intensification of a dialectical process of "glocalization" (Robertson, 1995; Kearney, 1995), in the sense that the "local" was greatly impacted, touched, and that it put to work "floating signifiers" flowing at "global" level and appropriated through the meeting between local actors and actors on the move. These 'men of God' also participate in the "worlding process inherent in the very formation of African cities themselves": "people have been prepared to migrate (...) with little apparent hesitation" (Simone, 2001, p. 18). They surely contribute to a global process of scalar recomposition and the reconfiguration of social cohesion that ensues (Mbembe & Simone, 2001).

Many Congolese played and still play the role of transmitter, translator and interpreter for foreign missionaries and evangelists. Think of the pioneer assistant of English Baptist missionary Bentley, Nlemvo, who was his interpreter in kikongo and largely contributed to the first translation of the Bible in kikongo (Ndaywel, 1998, p. 350; Braekman, 1961, p. 72 & 81) but who is usually ignored. However, translation usually proceeds from analogy and the "demon of analogy", associated with the "working misunderstandings" of Marshal Sahlins, played a decisive role in African readings of the Christian message (Mary, 2000, pp. 36-37). The psychoanalyst Fethi Benslama (2002), who addressed the issue of "hyphenation of the traditional subject" through Islam, proposes to think of translation as foundation: "when abroad is the origin, the principle of the test in the language is inevitably translation; translation becomes a

corollary of the foundation "(p. 126). In this perspective, the question of "referent circulating from one translation to another" is fundamental (Benslama & Nancy, 2006).

"The Spirit of Pentecost": operator of transformations and outing principle of localism and ethnicity

In a process that the actors themselves interpret in terms of transition from spiritualism to evangelism, a careful approach of the referent circulating from one "place" to another and from one translation to another invites to decompose the question of charisma – issue that is on the side of both prophetism and pentecostalism (Mary, 2009) – in three transverse elements in the covered time and space:

1/The Bible. The Bible can be understood as a territory in the literal sense: to the extent that the Bible verses are inscribed in the Kinshasa area to the point that it is possible to move from verse to verse as you go from house to house, pharmacy to pharmacy, cafe to cafe ... each building has a verse for foundation and brand name. While on the metaphorical level, the great biblical narrative (*grand narrative*) allows for infinite metaphors of a "(post)colonial trauma" (Craps, 2013), about which we may wonder if it is not a heritage in itself, and is in any case a diasporic territory favorable to all projections and self-reinvention ...

2/The figure of the interpreter who uses mediation of the Spirit – Other third – to formulate a social commentary. It lets us see the Spirit of Pentecost as a transformation operator both psychic – in terms of trans-subjectivation (Benslama, 1995; Van Dijk, 1997, 2001) – and social. In this sense, the proliferation of interpreters that we see today indicates a crisis point for the interpretation and therefore meaning in a context of change, where the readability of the present becomes problematic.

3/Trances. Even prohibited, trances are resilient throughout the line. The prejudicial matter of trances as leaving oneself, exiting physicality, but also all racial and ethnic categories, all family anchors, cuts across the entire religious field. Trances or "spiritual rhythm" is a dance of the transgression of boundaries and discriminations, a dance of subversion of sociopolitical orders, a dance of the trans-port of oneself regarding social, geographical and psychological levels. We are faced with the ownership of a "religious concept" by migrating individuals – migration is taken here as a metaphorical displacement from self in relationship to self (Metraux, 2011) – and this concept generates a proliferation of "places" that allow for new restructuration and for negotiating social relations that often go through the sphere of the invisible.

New interpreters of God, men and social contexts, constantly recreate new "instituting places" regardless of all institutional locations. The concept of "instituting place", if it refers to heterotopias often borrowed from Foucault, also mobilizes other theoretical contributions (Legendre, 1994; Benslama, 2003, 2009) that turn them into "phoric spaces", anchoring and inscription places where decisive work on the production of collective blended identities and metamorphosed individualities occur, which must support each other in "the connection between the local and the cosmopolitan" (Mbembe, 2000, p. 40; 2001, 2002). These "places" rest on the use of imaginary formations which are also the mental frameworks from which the memory of the past is reinterpreted and the trial of the present is made significant. Social consistency of place as a collective space raises the question of relationship to space as a medium of belonging, when the individual is no longer necessarily rooted in a given territory.

Spiritual Warfare

At the end of the chain of trans-local and trans-historical reconstructions through the prism of the Spirit of Pentecost, we find the radical "spiritual warfare," a ministry today transnational created by the couple Olangi in the early 1990s (Meiers, 2013). The testimonies of deliverance highlight to saturation the family sphere transformed into spiritual arena. Spiritual bonds of servitude and limitation are generated by local totem alliances, also called ground alliances. Everyone is invited to identify the totem by which he was bound and which governs him/her - crocodile, snake, electric fish, python are often mentioned in the stories of people met at N'djili but also elephant, leopard, etc. Totems connect to a clan or well-defined areas (water, forests, etc.) and must be broken: "If you go home like a turtle, you won't evolve. (...) Ground alliances, concluded in the village with the land, are alliances without borders, they follow you wherever you go "(comment from the testimony of a faithful preacher). Olangistes's struggle against these alliances that refer to local belonging specific to each believer is to be linked with the fight against territorial spirits theorized by Peter Wagner (President of Global Harvest Ministries).

Spiritual warfare comes with an intense struggle for the uprooting of local societies and participation in the "ecumene" world. Local alliances inscribe followers, despite themselves, in the continuity of Pentecostal trial with regard to the village life (Laurent, 2001, 2005), although they have left this world for two or three generations. The break with the demonized origins results in the relegation of village and clan alliances on the side of the animal and the unfit. These territorial alliances that have become obsolete, which also remind us of the demons of the first areas of the mystical quest of Teresa of Avila, are an obstacle to change, personal enrichment, social and geographical mobility, self-globalization, in reference to this eloquent

quote from a preacher: "I'm not African, or European or Asian, I'm a universal man. My mind allows me to be at home anywhere in the world ... ". The followers of spiritual warfare reenact the drama of "rise in civilization" in which they were locked up and express a wild ambition for exiting the "native", the "autochthonous", to enter fully into the universal and conquer the world.

From this point of view, the locality of N'djili appears, from its foundation, as a territory constantly expanding and evolving, constantly structured, unstructured, restructured by a *genius loci* (spirit of place), the Spirit of Pentecost whose mixed nature in reference to the wiles of the Greek *Metis* and her transformation properties, makes it a principle of transformation par excellence.

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