PATHS TOWARD THE PAST

AFRICAN HISTORICAL ESSAYS

IN HONOR OF

JAN VANSINA

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LETTER-WRITING, NURSING MEN AND BICYCLES IN THE BELGIAN CONGO: NOTES TOWARDS THE SOCIAL IDENTITY OF A COLONIAL CATEGORY

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The essay considers the little-studied colonial category of African male nurses while drawing attention to a resource seldom used by social historians to investigate the colonial experience in Africa. Seven Lokele-language letters, which were originally printed in a Congolese Baptist mission magazine called *Mboli ya Tengai*, are reprinted here along with English translations.[1] A group of Christian African men who were living and working in a rural region of the Belgian Congo authored these letters. They were trained as evangelical workers at a Baptist Missionary Society mission station called Yakusu, located on the Upper Congo River, 15 miles downriver from Stanleyville and just north of the Bambole forest. One purpose of this essay is to draw attention to this kind of African-language evangelical monthly as a significant resource for studying the ideas and self-images of African intellectuals in a colonial situation. Secondly, many of these letter-writers were nurses; the consequence is this inquiry into the social identity and imaginary[2] of this colonial category in the Belgian Congo.

The heart of this study lies in the richness and originality of the documentation presented in the third of four parts — individually authored, colorful, epistolary prose revealing the imaginative labor, social relations and symbolic play that contributed to the construction of a colonial category of evangelical nursing men. The first part of the essay looks at evidence on Congolese attitudes about nursing as a colonial vocation and sketches a tentative historical image of a Congolese colonial *infirmier* (male nurse). Mobility, leisure and autonomy emerge as significant attributes in this first part. The image of a bicycle-riding nurse also cycles through, reappearing in one of the Lokele letters in a nurse's dream. The second part contextualizes the history of medical care in Stanleyville and Yakusu; the Lokele language and mission printing at Yakusu; and the historical value of this African-authored source. The final part follows the reprinting and translation of the seven unabridged letters, including four by nurses (*ba-infirmier*). The argument is that these nurses possessed important affinities with Yakusu-trained teachers (*baekesi*) as evangelists and "knowledge brokers,"[3] yet nurses also formed a separate colonial category with distinct work and distinct poetics. Indeed, their words and ideas display the aspirations — even whimsy — of an emerging colonial social type, rural mobile hygiene workers of the inter-war period.

Colonial Medicine, Mobility and the Position of Nursing

African nurses were necessary workers from the earliest days of the Congo Independent State. They were also men.[4] They appear in the colonial archival record,

as Jean-Luc Vellut has shown, as anonymous, practically trained personnel, often West African, working in state and company hospitals organized to care for equally unnamed, also male, Congolese workers. Their obscurity fades when one approaches missionary-authored literary sources. Indeed, only the names and deeds of mission-trained nurses survive.[5] Although studies of health and healing constitute an expanding sub-field within African history, the African men who did much of the nursing in colonial Africa have been rather overlooked. Indeed, the contraction of the history of gender into women's history in Africanist writing has meant that we know far more about colonial-trained African midwives and nursing sisters than we do about their more numerous male counterparts.[6]

Did Congolese men aspire to be nurses? Was it a prestigious vocation? First, consider what colonial medical archives reveal about the reputation of nursing in the city of Stanleyville in 1927. Students in the primary and professional school in this colonial city gave twelve reasons for not enrolling in the school for "Native Medical Assistants."

1) One is too easily punished with prison.
2) Certain Sundays one is not free to go out strolling [*se promener*].
3) Certain duties are loath to us.
4) At night one is alone keeping watch, and in case of death, one must transport cadavers.
5) For the least fault, they withhold 5, 10 or 15 francs of salary.
6) We do not like to help with autopsies because of the bad odor given off by the cadavers.
7) One must always go out in the Native Medical Assistant uniform and one is recognized everywhere.
8) In the event of war, nurses are militarized.
9) A nurse works a lot and gains little.
10) We don't like to be night guardian.
11) They take ordinary blacks [*les noirs ordinaires*] for the Native Medical Assistant school; the intelligent blacks go into offices.
12) Upon leaving primary school, one can gain a lot of money as a clerk with shopkeepers [*commerçants*] instead of going to the school for Native Medical Assistants.[7]

As much as one might regret the way this list of complaints and reservations unites the diverse voices of primary and professional school students,[8] these homogenized African opinions contain compelling clues about nursing work, prestige and style in inter-war Stanleyville. City boys and young men, it tells, did *not* want to grow up to be like the Catholic-schooled, state-trained nurses found working in Stanleyville's hospital. Yet this document only advises about those who did *not* choose nursing as a vocation.

Now consider this contrasting evidence, the memories collected from a Congolese nurse of the lower Congo region in the 1960s:

> When I was very young, although I didn't really know anything about medicine, I was influenced by medical personnel that I saw. I went to school in a little village near K. ..., where there was a hospital in which *infirmiers* [illegible] I didn't know the difference between them

> but I saw what they did, and it interested me .... When I was in my fourth year of primary school, I used to see the same *infirmier* on his way to work every morning on his bicycle. He wore a white helmet on his head, with the Belgian emblem and motto "*L'Union fait la Force*," a sign that distinguished him from ordinary workers. I thought him very impressive .... At the end of our fifth year in primary school, when we were asked to write on a small slip of paper what school we would like to enter and what we would like to become, I sat there with the paper in front of me and reflected on this for a moment. I was already influenced by my vision of that nurse I used to see every day. And without any doubts I wrote that I wanted to be a nurse.[9]

The authors of this rare sociological study of African nurses note that the attraction of nursing for these men who grew up to be "native medical assistants" in the Belgian Congo resemble the kind of "youthful attraction" that becoming a doctor held for many young men in Europe and North America. Yet they add: "there are certain emphases in these boyhood testimonies that seem to be more specifically Congolese." They suggest that the "right to use needles" embodied aspiring Congolese nurses' "desire for status, authority, and power."[10] Yet the testimony that they share indicates that nursing uniforms, football matches, microscopes and bicycles were among the signs that made these memories "specifically Congolese."

These two isolated and conflicting pieces of evidence are hardly sufficient to write a social history of the popularity of nursing, yet together they pose an important set of terms and issues for further investigation. The Stanleyville document demonstrates that hospital discipline, low salaries, military connotations, including collective memories of hygiene-related conscription during World War I and loathed hospital duties — autopsies, cadaver transport and night guardian work — were among the reasons city boys discounted urban nursing work. The list of complaints offers clues about how uniforms marked nurses as an inescapably identifiable colonial category, inferior to the more "intelligent" colonial clerks. The longing for anonymity reinforces the impression of the second-rate, demeaning station of these nocturnal bodily workers who were obliged to guard and handle bodies, odors and corpses. The ambience of confinement and coercion underlines the longing for freedom of movement and leisure time: "Certain Sundays one is not free to go out strolling." The contrasting evidence, a young boy's post-World War II "vision" of the "impressive" nurse with the distinctive helmet "on his way to work every morning on his bicycle" suggests a substantial alteration in the quality and prestige of colonial nursing work by the 1950s.

Maryinez Lyons' recent study of sleeping sickness tells little about the men who were African nurses in the Belgian Congo. Yet this pioneering work exposes how critical mobility was to the history of Belgian colonial medicine. She demonstrates that struggles over transport and movement, especially barriers to mobility authorized in the name of colonial hygiene, fed the expressions of African contempt for and flight from the strictures of sleeping sickness campaigns.[11] As nurses moved about helping doctors inspect the population, she implies, those who they found to be sick or living in infected areas were condemned to motionlessness. Similarly, the two contrasting pieces of evidence above point to the importance of mobility to the experience of colonial medicine, and of clothing, autonomy, leisure time and technology to the status and identity of colonial nursing men. If mobility and nursing went in tandem in the Belgian Congo, at least in rural areas from the time of mobile sleeping sickness

campaigns of the 1920s, was the ambulatory style of nursing what made the work attractive?[12]

Nursing and Letter-Writing as History

Nursing may not have been a popular career among city boys in inter-war Stanleyville. Yet the founding of a nurse training school at the evangelical mission of Yakusu, located 15 miles away, served to animate the development of state-sponsored native medical care in this colonial provincial capital.

Stanleyville was not a privileged site for colonial medical facilities at least until the mid-1920s. In 1905, the Stanleyville state doctor complained that he would soon close the provisional mud-walled hospital for Africans because they would find cleaner conditions, if less care, at home. A new brick hospital was begun in late 1904, but by 1908, it was still not completed. In 1908, it was only a single building, where all the patients, regardless of age or sex or condition, were mixed together.[13] By 1909, the room was divided in two large dormitories, but unlike the city's prison there was neither a kitchen nor cooks to feed the institution's inmates. "Two dormitories alone cannot constitute a hospital," ran the doctor's complaint in 1910, as did Dr. Veroni's plea for a room for autopsies later that year: "I had to do an autopsy on the cadaver of a woman in my courtyard, on a table in the middle of a cloud of flies, a dangerous thing that should never happen."[14] It was also about 1910 that a first nursing school opened in the city, but there were soon difficulties finding students: "It is difficult to find blacks who are intelligent enough. As for the literate (*lettrés*), since they find more advantageous positions with private employers, it is impossible to find any who want to follow the courses."[15] Meanwhile, despite the discussion of beginning construction on a new hospital for Africans in 1913, the old African hospital was still in use in 1923. Although its maximum capacity was supposed to be only 35 beds, there were usually at least fifty patients, so the beds were crowded into three rows per room in the building which measured 7 by 35 meters. The nursing school was a mere room with no school furniture.[16]

The colonial hygiene bureau decided to increase the number of schools for nurses in the colony in the early 1920s, including one in Stanleyville,[17] where the new native hospital finally opened in 1925. By 1926, there was discussion of how to best solve a "personnel crisis" in the city,[18] including the urgency of attracting nursing students by increasing student allowances and nurse salaries to make the career more desirable.[19] In 1927, there were only three nurses, three cooks and 16 workers among the African personnel, whereas the total staff needed was supposed to consist of ten nurses, six cooks and 13 workers.[20] Nursing, as we have already seen, was not popular work among city boys in inter-war Stanleyville. The collection in 1927 of the schoolboy complaints listed above shows that the authorities were trying to comprehend and alter the image of nursing as inferior, contaminated work. Part of the Stanleyville "personnel crisis" was finding students who knew any French. Part of the problem was that most of the province's labor needs for nurses lay not in the city itself but in its extensive network of dispensaries in rural and mining areas,[21] places where city men, it was argued, would hardly be persuaded to go work. And part of the problem was prestige, and a growing sense of competition with the nearby medical mission of Yakusu that was turning out nurses, trained in its nursing school, to work in its own network of rural dispensaries. Yakusu's fame was a long-standing worry; as early as 1909, that state doctor in Stanleyville, Dr. Veroni, pointed out that this English

mission had "a magnificent medication room" and that for reasons of the state's reputation, if none other, he needed one, too.[22] And this was well before Yakusu became an important medical mission in the colony. Yakusu did not begin to medicalize its activities until the early 1920s, when its first doctor arrived. A hospital, which also served as a nurse training school, was soon under construction. By 1925, there was "a happy gang of hopefuls", young men between the ages of 13 and 20, living in a hostel, wearing nurse uniforms, and playing on the mission football field. They "rejoic[ed] in the name of *ba-infirmier*".

> This means that they hope someday to be Infirmiers, (not B.A.s) which when translated into actual practice will mean a combination of the functions of the first aid man, the orderly or nurse, the dispenser, dresser and sanitary authority possibly carrying in their pocket the Government diploma which legalises their practice under the supervision of a proper authority.[23]

By 1928, official misgivings in Stanleyville concerned Yakusu's "indisputable increase in moral authority" because the mission was posting its evangelically trained nurses in dispensaries in the region.[24] Nevertheless, provincial authorities sanctioned the Yakusu mission's three-year training course for nurses because of the shortage of nurses in the province; they were having difficulties finding ample students for Stanleyville's nursing school, never mind nurses for regional hospitals and dispensaries.[25] After qualification, most Yakusu-trained nurses worked for a year at the training hospital before being sent to work at a rural health center, usually in the mission's 10,000-square-mile district, for at least another two years. Dispensaries began as wattle and daub buildings, equipped with drugs, a microscope, a table covered with a zinc sheet for minor surgery and sometimes a few huts to lodge patients.[26] By the 1950s, the Yakusu district network had expanded with considerable funding from a post-war welfare fund into 18 brick rural health centers, each equipped with "a bicycle and a monthly allowance therefor," in order to visit the 36 satellite treatment centers and maintain special clinics for infants, toddlers and pregnant women.[27]

It was within this context that Yakusu-trained African Christians began to publish letters in their evangelical monthly. Lokele is a Western Bantu language spoken along the Upper Zaire River between Stanleyville and Isangi; it was codified as the medium of evangelical instruction and oral and written communication within the Yakusu mission district.[28] Yakusu published its first Lokele title in 1899; and by 1908, the mission had 21 Lokele-language publications available for sale.[29] In 1910, the Yakusu missionaries launched a mission bulletin, also printed in Lokele and called *Mboli ya Tengai*, or "News of the Month". *Mboli ya Tengai* continued to be published every month for the next fifty years. This monthly publication of church communication was intended for African evangelical workers and church members. It began as a simple recording of offerings received and church announcements; the same mission courier who collected monthly gifts of church members and catechumens simultaneously delivered the magazine.[30] Within the first decade of publication, Yakusu-trained teacher-evangelists (*baekesi*) who were posted at village chapels and schools throughout the forest district, began to publish letters to their fellow church members in this bulletin. By the 1930s, a second group of evangelical workers — Yakusu-trained nursing men — joined their teaching colleagues as publishing correspondents in the pages of *Mboli ya Tengai*. The analysis that follows considers affinities and differences among these two groups of mission-educated men.

First, a few comments on the value and use of this type of source are in order. The quest for African voices is still proffered as innovative among historians of colonial Africa; life histories are commonly used, as is song; meanwhile, others have turned to popular paintings, photographs and sculpted objects as novel sources for uncovering African social history.[31] Despite these methodological departures, it is still noteworthy how frequently African perspectives and representations tend to be pursued either through European texts or through African memory, however oral, lyric or visual the medium of memory might be. Historical studies using African-authored texts as primary sources remain exceedingly rare.[32] Janzen and MacGaffey, in an incomparable collection of translations of a variety of African-authored Kikongo religious texts, are among the very few scholars to have worked with an evangelical bulletin like *Mboli ya Tengai*.[33] Another important scholarly treatment of an African-authored, African-language text is Fabian's publication of the history of a Congolese city, "Vocabulary of Elisabethville". Whereas Janzen and MacGaffey feature the writings of mission catechists and prophetic religious workers in Kikongo, Fabian examines a text commissioned and co-authored by a group of colonial domestic workers.[34] The *Mboli ya Tengai* letters composed by evangelical nursing men bridge these two categories of literate, colonized men: male nurses, after all, were a kind of colonial domestic worker and many began their careers as missionary "boys."[35]

Such African-authored, mission-printed letters are less significant as evidence about African literacy and reasoning[36] than because they impart the words and dreams of a set of African colonial actors. Their ideas persist, mediated not through memory and a researcher's inquiries but through the editing politics and processes of a colonial mission printing press. Even though it is impossible to reconstruct these selection and censoring routines, the printed letters are an unparalleled source for studying the brokering of knowledge[37] and the formation of social identities in a colonial situation. Most are also stories of struggle and conflict. Thus the letters defy binary representations of colonialism that assume only Europeans were colonizers, only Europeans brokered knowledge, only Europeans wrote texts. They present an alternate view of who was encountering whom in colonial life from that typically found in Africanist historical writing.

Letters as Evidence[38]

1. Lokasa Loa M. Isamoiso Wa Yangembe

Ino baina ba'mi okaka imi mbo elikuwa li lia boekesi otiyale la lotendela ae angoyala boekesi.

Okaka to, lise lia Yenga imi loleka liyande ndoke likangesi Binasilonga. Nda mboka boto omoi wa lisoo loekamesa lisoo mbo imi imateleke. La mbisa'mi lomatela eliso li imi loonga mbo knoda lisangi lia Yesu Ngene wa likuwa eli, ichawe yeka. Nda Yenga yasi imi loke omau liasi, koongmoa liasi.

La mbisa boekesi Isalombi loesa wendi ende imi mbo oyeke nda Binasilonga liasi eoka bato ba basoo batolambaka ae nda mboka. Kongo ko imi loonga mbo iyo eba liya batoola bindo kongo, nde Bolimo wa liwawi lia'mi bole wa Mungu. La mbisa bolimo wa kanga loonga mbo boya oto wa lisoo okotende Baekesi la lisoo ele ko bule, nyongo iyo batokende la Bolimo Mungu. La bato ba bokenge wa'mi iyo loonga la'mi fine mbo oeke likangesi liasi. Imi loonga mbo bofoka wa … *Imi to mbo iso Baekesi toyaleke la lotendela, la tosemboleke*

LETTER OF M. ISAMOISO OF YANGEMBE

You my friends, listen to me about this work of a teacher [*boekesi*]. If you do not have courage you cannot be a teacher [evangelist, *boekesi*].[40]

Listen. Sunday I crossed the river to go teach at Binasilonga. On my way, one person who had medicine [*lisoo*] spread it in the pathway so I would step over it [and die]. So I stepped over this medicine, saying in the name of Jesus Himself who is the master of this work, "Nothing is going to happen to me." Another Sunday I went there again.

Later the teacher Isalombi sent me a message telling me to come again to Binasilonga because people were going to be hiding, waiting for me with medicine as I went on my way there. So I said, "Yes, those who have hatred kill only the body. My spirit belongs to God." So the spirit of the *kanga* [healing specialist] said that if you have a medicine to kill Teachers, the medicine is not going to work because they are protected by God the Spirit. The people of my village told me frequently to be careful and seek protection. And I told them that I have the power of God, my Lord. I am saying that we Teachers should have courage and should praise Jesus that he gives us his Spirit of Power.

2. Lokasa Loa Tolanga Wa Yalongolo

Ende baina ba Etanda la baekesi ino eneke lioi limoi elitoonga imi eoka ya basongo basu mbile bitotina mbo okeleke likuwa lia Mungu la mbile eoka Mungu achakelaka iso la mbile, la tosoene bakuwa ebatokela baekesi bamoi eoka ososo atoene iyo bofeko wa basongo la mbisa atoke ndoemela oso wa basongo ndofa iyo lolanga mbo imi isolembe boekesi la mbisa atooso inde kasa la atokende basongo atotikala inde nda bokenge wande inde angoenyela imo ndoke nda bokenge ebokafomoko inde. Nda bokenge ebosoke imi omau ele esika fine nde akiki imi ososo iyo loyala kwa ndowanga nde imi loluwa lioi liau imi loke la weli la weli ndoongana lau la ndofa iyo baoi bofa iyo yeme limo imi loene bato nda Sukulu[41] limo basango bau longa mbo ae boekesi faka bana basu lisoo limo imi mbo mba nda likuwa lia Mungu liti la lisoo, lisoo limwito kondoya nda Sukulu.[42]

LETTER OF TOLANGA OF YALONGOLO

To my Church fellows and teachers, listen to my news which I am telling you. As our white persons [*basongo*] always say: you cannot do the work of God at one time because God did not make us all at one time. I say this because we have seen the works which some teachers do. At the beginning when they see the agent of white people, they do the work and then later he goes to introduce himself to the white people to tell them the lie that he wants to be a teacher. Later on, after receiving his letters [*kasa*][43] and after the white persons are gone, he stays in his village and does not go to the village which was assigned to him. In the village which was given to me, this is a good place. When I went there, at the beginning they almost feared me, and then I learned their language and continued very well to talk to them and to give them good thoughts. And I saw people coming to School and their fathers said, "You, teacher, give our children one medicine [*lisoo*]," and I answered, "No, in the work of God, there is no medicine. The only medicine is to come to School."[44]

3. Lokasa Loa Lititiyo Ende Baina

Lokasa Ende Baina lami Baekesi la Bato ba Etanda Losamo la Liseeli ènde ino. Luwakai mbo Ngene wasu ako Masiya Yesu aongaka mbo imi yende Lowa loa bato. Boto la boto oyatolendelo ko inde atokokolo adolembeela njaso ebile nda lilima eoka iyo basofomo lowa lolembeela la njaso ebile nda lilima. Iso kwani tole bana ba Lowa. Tokoteke bato nda loasolo. Imi itoonga lanu imi mbo mbile etoyala oto omoi wasu la loo, eyambo osotuta Kanga ndofinde lisoo kufesaka Kanga ndosiya oto lisoo la isasandu esiemesani nda liseke liande eoka isasandu si sitisiyomo oto omwito sitosiyomo nde la bato wike, eto kwani ngwo bisoya wike ebitofaekefana bato la bakila. Kanga atolembe kondoso bieto angokufesa ndotinya oto lisoo, angoko wa Bosingisi ango wa Baendi, ango wa Tokoli. Ani liseke lia Kanga lile ko limoi eti olau. Kanga basekeke lisoo bafeleke oto okwa batikeke inde la liao angokonda lokenge inga ndokasiyimo bato basi eliande eoka ototola bakila ndokasiya la oto wasi. Eokimo Kangasu biitolembeela bakila kwa abe kwa alau eokaye ngwo bisulwa. Kotaka ndokufesa Tosandu twa baseke ba Kanga. Itiyonge ani bule, iyonginde la litina. Tene oso Kobo ya Elambo ya Bokota yaaka emwito. Tosomwa oto eyande oto eyande. Etikelomo ongoma bule ekelomu kola litina oto wasi aitomachelimo oto wasi.

Kwani baseke ba Kanga la tosandu etotosiya iyo la bato to sotola bakila wike, kanga ati oto wa okenge omwito monito? Atokasiya bato la liseke ko limwito la isasandu ko simwito esiilenda liseke. Ani ino Bana ba lowa otoene la baiso banu kotaka ndolembeela njaso ya bato ebale nda lilima, iso ndasootomo nda lowa toongeke mbo: Sekelaka inde eliande angene.

Tene Basono batosiya oto lifululu ndotanesa la bakila baitooso imo liao liyasi, kanga oko ndokusha tungi nda alia.

Imi angomacha ndosombola Bokota mbo alembeeleseke iso njaso ya bato ebale nda lilima eoka toyale nde bana ba Lowa.

Bootaota wa Yesu boyaleke lanu.

Imi Lititiyo Yosefa.[45]

LETTER OF LITITYO TO MY FRIENDS

Letter To My Fellow Evangelists and People of the Church. Love and Greetings to you. Know that our Lord and Master Jesus has said that I am the Light of people. Every person who accepts this will understand, since they have been given the light, that they are not going to favor things which are in darkness. We are children of the Light. Be careful. Let us refuse those things which people who are in the darkness are doing. Let us help people in the light of the truth. I am telling you this so when somebody among you is sick, you follow the *kanga* to get him to give him the medicine, smearing the person with medicine [*lisoo*][46] and a mixture of medicine [*isasandu*] which is in his horn [*liseke*][47] because the mixture of medicine is not for one person. It is for many people. Thus there are many things which people give and receive to each other through blood [*bakila*]. The *kanga* wants only to get wealth [*bieto*][48] and does not fail to cicatrize people with medicine[49] whether it be those who suffer from Sleeping Sickness [*Bosingisi*], Leprosy [*Baendi*], or *Tokoli*.[50] The very fact that the horn of the *kanga* is only one is not good. The *kanga* crushes the coal from the fire, crushing it into a black powder medicine, and asks the person to leave the medicine with him without going to the village, giving to other people theirs because

he will use the same blood to treat another person. So this *kanga* of ours[51] in this way will allow a good and a bad blood to mingle. He will introduce and take out the medicine [*tosandu*] from the *kanga* horns. I am not saying this out of nothing. I am saying it for a reason. First, the Lord's Cup of Communion — each person drinks his own, each person drinks his own — it is not done this way for nothing. It has a reason. Another person does not leave his for another person.

Why is it that the horns of *kanga* and the medicine [*tosandu*] with which they treat people combine many bloods? And the *kanga* is not someone of the village. Come on! Be serious! He goes to treat people with only one horn and one medicine [*isasandu*] which is in the horn. As you can see, you People who found the light, you see with your own eyes. Don't allow yourself to accept the things of people who are in the darkness. We, who have found the light, we say that he should make for each his own medicine.

When White Men treat a person and dirt gets in the blood, they don't use it again. But the *kanga* doesn't remove debris from the water.

Me, I will not stop praying to the Lord that he not permit the ways of people who are living in darkness because we are the children of the Light.

Friendship of Jesus be with you.

I, Lititiyo Yosefa.

4. Lokasa Loa Liita Infremier [sic]

Ende ino baina bami ba Etanda ya Yesu Bokota wasu. Tene ile la mboli sumbu ndotel'ino mbo: Nda liakoli lia mwaka wa kwani kwani imi isoiya ono nda Yaongama ndosunga basi; kwa aongaka Yesu Bokota mbo: Oto oyakalembeke ndosunga basi Inde kosung'iyo.

Tene! Imi isosekwa nda Yanonghe la lokasa loa Bosongo Bonganga nda lise lia ambale ndosekwa nda Yakusu nda le 7 Jan. 30. Limo iso lokwa nda Camion ya (Mr Andrades) la Mr Andrades loonga lami mbo: lokendo loae loitoengana louse eoka Camion ale nda lokendo la imi loimela lioi lia Bosongo, la Bosongo ona lofa imi ndako imi la Kilima la wali wami la baelo bami 2 la etungani yami.

La nongo fi iso lota biengo nda Camion, la bosongo loonga lami mbo: esoengana wali wae la Kilima la welo wae ndoeta la Camion nde ino basato etaka la boili, eoka ae ole la kinga[52] *yae. La imi lokulia mbo: Ongoma bwana.*[53] *Limo iyo loila lokendo iyo loiya nda Yataohema la midi, nde iso loingala nda bokenge ona; iso loila lokendo iso loiya nda Yalifoka la iso losekwa nda Yalifoka iso loiya nda Yaongama B.M.S.*[54] *78 Km.*

Tene baina lami isoene lokendo loa tale fine eoka y'iye? Isoene fongo bifi la bisa fine, eoka ya liimeli! Oyatosila ndotanga lokasa lo atangeke lokasa loa felo botuku wa 5 la 6. Samo ende batotina. Sombolaka. Ngene mbo: asungek'iso nda likuwa li onomono ende iso.

Imi B. Y. P. Liita Infirmier[55]

LETTER OF NURSE LIITA

To my fellows of the Church of Lord Jesus. You see, I have news to tell you. This year I came here to Yaongama to help others, and as Jesus has said somebody who wants to help others should help them.

So! I left for Yanonghe with a letter from *Bosongo Bonganga* on Tuesday. I left Yakusu on January 7, 1930. We took the Truck (of Mr. Andrades)[56] and Mr. Andrades

said to me: "This trip will be good and today is the day because the truck is ready for the trip." I accepted the words of the White Man, and this White Man gave me a house for me and Kilima and my wife and my two elder brothers and the youngest of the family.

Very early in the morning, we loaded the Truck, and the White Man told me: "It is best that your wife and Kilima and one of your elder brothers go in the Truck. And you three take the path away from the river because you have your bike." I answered: "Yes, *bwana*." And so they began the trip and arrived in Yatolema at noon. We slept at that village. We continued the trip and arrived at Yalifoka, and we left Yalifoka and arrived at Yaongoma B.M.S. 78 km.

You see, my friends, why did I imagine that that trip was so difficult? I saw very big and long hills and this is true! He who finishes reading this letter, he should read the first letter, chapter 5 and 6.[57] Best wishes to everybody. Praise the Maker himself that He helps us in this work which we are doing here.

I, B. Y. P. Liita *Infirmier*.

5. Lokasa Loa Victor Yenga

Imi ndatooka olau ndofa ino mboli yami ya likuwa liami nda Yaongama. Aiyaka imi ono imi loakola likuwa, la imi loene bato wike ba ngwo nda Dispensaire. Nde kwani toitoene imo wike wau, la wewe litina lile omau eoka ya liwangi liau eoka ya Basongo ba l'etat[58] *ebale ono la bakuwa ba tale ebatokeloso bato ono. Eokao ko la eliyeye-li bato angoya imo la weli nda Dispensaire yasu. Nda 16 Juin 1931 yayalaka la likuwa life wewe la eliaenyelesaka'mi imi mbo isoyene loaso lofi ono nda Bambole ani angwene ango omoi wa ofindi wami ono. Loaso lowau!*

Yaaka nde wana omoi loya ende imi la yumbi (baita lonuko). Lipome mbo ikeleke Operation (likuwa lia liati).[59] *Imi lofela wana yo mbo: Litina mboni? osoya ende imi ani yumbi yae ele efi ani moni? Isoenyela mbo iitolonga yao ofono-bo kanga Bonganga*[60] *angene, nde wana yo loonga mbo eti loaso kotaka ngo komi. Isoya ende ae ko la lisomi eoka bainenge lami batomoloko imi lise la lise mbo: Tene likoko nda bokolo, limo imi kosoma mbo: Nyango wami achaotaka imi la yao. Eok'ao isoya louse ende ae ndosokola'mi. La'mi looka baoi bande ngandi ko nda isokota.*

Isoakola likuwa nda 8 heures ko nda 11 1/2 h. Isokela likuwa amamuito la bosungi ofi wa losamo ako Alonga Samwele. Atiteni ya likuwa ani isosokola shuma sina imi loene wana-yo la lilewi fine eoka ya lilefi wike lia bakila.

Wewe imi losolo inde ndoenyela mbo isoyaolo loaso ono ani Bambole bale bato babe. Isokota ndolonga ndokanda tosali tototina eoka yumbi ena yayalaka nda botimba mbisa ya lilwi eseke ya tale sumbu konda isosolo isokanda. Limo tososele wana-yo tina la ndako yasu, ongama tosotingana lande la litingani lilau la likomyi lilau. Limo tososombola fine loaso loa wana. Ani isoenyela oso mbo Mungu esunga iso loaso loa wana-yo, imi angokela imo likuwa-li lia liati konda losekwo loami ono!

Eoka liati elisoata imi ndoata wana yo lisoeta bao bambale ebaakelaka imi oso bako Bokota, sango wa Yalofombo la otomali omoi wasi. Asokweela imi yao bolito esoengana 230 grammes. Tene nda lifeki liami ndokela likua lina liasi, isoolo limutoli ani ile atiteni ya tange yami la ocho mbo: Osofeka moni? Boya la weli kwa boya la yeka ya lioli mbo ae koisa yao, ani angokela yao la likuwa ae koolo lioli to ko la iye? angoko mbo ae koolo to lokuku lolau loa weli wae ko la moni ani otikuwe la weli wae?

Liasi mbo ole la kinga yae eyeti la loaso ango sinyo mbo ae koke ko nda

sumbu ewa ebebe nda loaso-lo. Nyongo kinga eti la bofeko ndoisomo nda ndako ani etikende la kinga yande bosungi wa batindi eoka ya kendo ya bisika. Kola bamutoli ba imi lolongamesa lina nda botena wami. Nde basi mbo: Eingo nde elua ikafomu to isosha ko la ngene wae ndoataka bofono bo ofi.

Kwani Mungu asosunga iso eoka ya wana ani asosasa inde la olau kelekele.[61]

LETTER OF VICTOR YENGA

I am pleased to give you the news of my work here in Yaongama. When I arrived here, I began to work and I saw many people at the *Dispensaire*. Now we don't see many of them. Truly the reason is their fear of the work of the White Men of the State that they are doing here. Because of this, people don't come monthly to their *Dispensaire*. On June 16, 1931, I had truly a lot of work, and when I finished I said to myself I have seen a big problem. Here, among the Bambole, there is nobody who is my enemy. This is good news!

A young man came to me recently with a fatty cyst. He told me to do an *opération* on him (the work of opening). I asked this young man: Why? Why do you come when your cyst is so big? I said that I was not able because this is work to be done by a *Bonganga* himself. And this young man answered that it is not a problem. "Operate on me. I have come to you because my children insult me every single day saying, `look at the cyst on the leg,' and I get angry saying, `my mother did not give birth to me with this.' Because of this, I have come to you today to take it away from me." When I heard his words, I felt sorry for him.

I did the work from 8 to 11:30. I was working with the big, loving help of Alonga Samwele. In the middle of the work, when I removed this round fruit of a cyst, I saw this young man tremble because there was a big loss of blood.

Truly, truly, and I said to myself that I have a problem here as the Bambole are bad people.[62] I tried to manage to tie the entire vein because that cyst was on the artery behind the knee, a difficult spot. And I tied. And we put this young man in our house, and yes, we watched over him very well. We prayed a lot for this young man. And, first, I say God helped us with the problem of this young man. I will never do this work of surgery [*likuwa-li lia liati*] again as long as I live here!

Because the operation of this young man surpassed the two ones which I did before on Bokoto, the head of Yalofombo, and on one woman. Its weight was 230 *grammes*. Why do I refuse to do this work again? I had a dream during the night on my bed. This is what they asked me when I was dreaming: "Why do you refuse this? If you have a talent, if you have something which can heal, don't hide this. If you don't use this, for what good will you be? If you do it, you will gain a good reputation for your talent. How come you are not going to work with your talent?"

"If you have a bike which cost a lot of money, there is no way that you go to Yanonge with your feet. Would you leave your bike in your house? If it is so, you are really a fool in this matter. Because there is no reason to hide the bike in your house which is the helper of the feet for long trips." So like this these people I was speaking with [in the dream] placed this idea in my heart. Other people said, "If he knows that it is given to be ridden, then the owner of it should know he should dress in a wonderful manner."

God has helped us by operating on this young man very well; what joy, thank you very much

6. Lokasa Loa Kamanga Samwele — Waluwa Kenge Etiwe

Ende baina bami edasangani lami nda likuwa lia Masiya bako bato ba Etanda. Nda tengai ya 6 nda bacho 9 1932 iso la Mama Bandombele twakelaka likuwa liasu nda Dispensaire, iso looka mboli mbo botomali omoi wa B.M.S. ale la wale nda solo ndonya bakila la iyo loenyela mbo lwende loo loa Ikoya. Eoka bamoi basu bakuluwi litina lia biale. Atichaka imi toi nda talatala eyefomu lina mbo Microscope imi loene amibienne, iso lofa inde iyolo sba emetine. Limo la nongo iso la Mama Bandombele loke liasi. Mama loene inde ani awati likenge nda loteta. Mama looso likenge, loaaka nda 2 heures iso la Mama loata liao, iso loene atiteni fembe la kota ya ekongo la swee bile omau atiteni! Aina lilimbi lia kanga yasu bato baindo, iso la Bosongo la Mama Bandombele la Mondele Mosongo[63] loseeke chuelo. Liwatemi la Masiya nda liwa liande litosingesa Bobe, Baloma 6 eyambo ototanga silesaka yao baina lami, limo otoene litina lia kanga ya basenji.[64]

Losamo ende ino Banangoli ba mboli ilau ya Masiya.

Imi Samwele Kamanga, Infirmier de la B.M.S. Yalikina.[65]

LETTER OF KAMANGA SAMWELE — KNOW THAT THE USE OF AMULETS IS NOT TRUE

To my friends who are united with me in this work of the Messiah and are members of the Church. On June 9, 1932, Mama Bandombele and I were doing our work in the dispensary, and we heard the news that a B.M.S. women was sick in the stomach and defecating blood, and people were saying that it was the disease of Ikoya.[66] Some of us do not know the cause of sicknesses [*biale*]. When I looked at the excrement in the mirror [*talatala*] which has been called Microscope, I saw amoebas, and we gave her oil of emetine. The next morning Mama Bandombele and I went again. Mama saw her wearing an amulet [*likenge*] around her hips. Mama took the amulet, it was 2:00, Mama and I, we tore it open and saw within nails and parrot feathers and fish! This is the cheating of the *kanga* of us black people [*bato baindo*]. Me and the White Man and Mama Bandombele and the White Man of the State laughed very hard. The acceptance of the Messiah's death will kill the devil, Romans 6, if you read it through, my friend, you will see the reason for the *kanga* of the heathen [*basenji*].

My love to you the preachers of the Good News of the Messiah.

I, Samwele Kamanga, *Infirmier* of B.M.S. Yalikina.

7. Bolimbi Asotombolomo

Ende baina bami ebasangani lami nda likendesi lia Mboli Ilau ya Masiya, okaka mboli ya kanga emoi ono. Nda tengai ya bosambale imi loene lolanga loa kanga emoi, eoka boto omoi nda bofindi wami aseleke nyama ya ngulube nda likula. Lise limoi ngulube ena lokima ndoungwa lokonda, limo iyo loluka ngulube ena becho esato angoene. Iyo loya ende'mi ndofela imi mbo: Kamanga okeni sumbu ngulube ono? Imi loonga mbo: Ikeni yao. Limo iyo loke ende kanga ena imi mbo: Elau ekawi, toticheke koni nde iyo angoka. Iyo loke la falanga[67] bimbale ende kanga, inde lofela ngenelwa ngulube mbo: Esoingala becho yanga? Inde mbo: Becho esato. Limo kanga loticha nda talatala inde mbo: Isoluwa oyoli ngulube yae, asosila ndosasa yao la ndolamba yao. Kendeke ndokoso falanga liu

kotamba wao isangakala. (Aina lolanga!) Limo okaka ngene wa ngulube ani, inde loya mangu ndoyoso falanga liu, limo imi lofela inde mbo: Ae osoinwa? Kanga aongi nde moni? Inde mbo Kanga asoonga mbo: Kendeke ndokoso falanga 10, iyeke ndoyaluwes'ae oto oyoli ngulube yae. Limo aeke inde imi loonga lande mbo: Angolendelo Mungu moni? Imi loticha mbisa ya Dispensaire yasu imi loene ngulube ani ale la liwawi, imi lokwa mangu ndokaluwesa iyo mbo: Isoene ngulube eyetoluk'ino, iyo mbo: Wewe? Imi mbo: Ani asooto nda ndako ndooso falanga 10. Aina lilima nda betema yasu! Lioi elisotunga lami lile mbo: Liumba like mbole o botutuku, like mbole o botutuku liumba like mbole o botutuku. Baina, bolau end'iso ndoengela lowa, inga tokendeleke nda lilima, esoeta la olau ani totokendele nda lowa.

Samo yami ende ino batotina ebatotanga lokasa-lo.

Imi infirmier Kamanga Samuel, B.M.S. Yalikina.[68]

THE SWINDLER IS CAUGHT

To my friends who are united with me in the promotion of the Good News of the Messiah, listen to the news of one *kanga*. In July, I saw the cheating of a *kanga*: one person in my family was raising pigs in an enclosure. One day, one pig ran away into the forest, and they were searching for it for three days without finding it. They came to me and asked me, "Kamanga, haven't you seen the pig here?" I replied, "I have not." Then they went to see a *kanga*, and I told them, "Will he know if it is still alive? Do not do this." But they didn't listen to me, and they went with two francs to the *kanga*, and he asked the owner of the pig, "How many days since this happened?" He answered, "Three days." And then the *kanga* looked at a mirror [*talatala*], and said, "I know who killed your pig. He has already slaughtered and cooked it. Go get ten francs and bring them to me. I will go to Yatamba as I know every person and I know their footprints." (This was a lie.) When the owner of the pig heard, he ran fast to get ten francs, and I asked him: "Are you back? What did the *kanga* say?" He replied, "The *kanga* told me, `go get ten francs and I will let you know the person who killed your pig.'" When he came back, I told him, "Why don't you follow God?" I looked behind our dispensary, and I saw a pig that had a bell, and I ran to tell them, "I saw the pig which you were looking for." They said, "Truly?" I said, "[Yes,] When you entered the house to get ten francs." What darkness in our hearts! I conclude with this word: Let the cheating stop. Let the cheating stop. Let the cheating stop. Friends, it is good to be in the light. Let us not walk in darkness. It is best to walk in the

My love to all who read this letter.

I, *infirmier* Kamanga Samuel, B.M.S. Yalikina

Words and Things, or Bicycle as Colonial Lexeme

These letters demonstrate that teaching and nursing, like reading and hygiene, were closely aligned fields in the Yakusu mission setting, especially from the 1920s. Reading and writing were no more the exclusive activities of *baekesi* than evangelical hygiene was simply the work of nurses.[69] Yet *baekesi* or teachers preceded *ba-infirmiers* in letter-writing as they did in encouraging conflicts over healing and medicine. *Baekesi* wrote three of the seven letters; theirs are also the earlier ones included here (1916-22). *Ba-infirmiers*, known as "nurse-evangelists" in some

very titles of these two types of colonial "knowledge brokers", as expressed in Lokele
prose, suggests that this inquiry into affinities among them will require attending to
the "poetics of lexical borrowing". In an analysis of French loanwords in Shaba Swahili
speech, Johannes Fabian has argued against reducing the phenomenon of lexical
interference from a colonial language into an African vernacular to "referential
semantics", that is, the functional demand for new labels to fit imported objects and
novel ideas and activities. Rather, Fabian maintains that an analysis of "gap-filling
needs and denotative necessity" must be paired with attention to "poetic choice" and
"connotative creativity".[70] Noting that the title of "teacher" was expressed through a
Lokele word (*boekesi*) and the title "nurse" (*infirmier*) was borrowed from colonial
speech begins this line of inquiry.

I use the notion of "the poetics of lexical borrowing" here less to investigate the
use of specific loanwords than to explore the inventive qualities of these African-
authored texts as evidence about the social identities of evangelical teachers and
nurses in a mission district of the Belgian Congo. Lokele speakers and authors, of
course, cannot be considered the only poets here. Likewise, to reduce the analysis of
borrowed "lexemes" to French terms would misconstrue the complexity — and
simultaneity — of imposition and creativity in the construction of colonial categories.
These letters are expressive works of writing. Where and when and how evangelists
and nurses borrowed words and symbols from colonial cultural milieus provides clues
about their social activities and imaginative labor in the larger historical process of
constructing identity.

Missionaries and their first Lokele translator assistants were the pioneering
Yakusu poets. Together they composed and codified the colonial evangelical lexicon
of the church and schools in the 1890s. The term *ba-infirmier*, introduced at Yakusu
in the 1920s, kept "native" nurses distinct from the missionary doctor, who was
instead naturalized and proudly so as *bonganga*.[71] As the letters show, the borrowed
French term for these new Congolese colonizers actively asserted a "native" antith-
esis, that is, *kanga*, the Lokele word for healer, diviner, or religious specialist. The
new, borrowed term — *infirmier* — in claiming difference and moral superiority
would have altered the semantic field; *kanga* were constructed as opponents, as the
embodiment of *basenji*, that is, the heathen and savage. (In English-language mission
publications, *kanga* was glossed pejoratively as "witchdoctor".) Yet agency did not
reside in the choice of a word alone. As the first letter by Isamoiso shows, Yakusu
teachers were usually strangers in the communities in which they worked, and their
presence provoked rivalry and strife. Conflict especially erupted over the use of *lisoo*,
a generic term (pl. *basoo*) for medicine and charms. "If you do not have courage you
cannot be a *boekesi*," insisted Isamoiso in 1916. His letter is a moral tale, demonstrat-
ing that such courage could be rewarding. In this case, village people tried to kill
Isamoiso, by placing some *lisoo* in his pathway on Sundays on his way to teach. Yet
he was not afraid and he deliberately defied the threat to his life and welcomed the
challenge of a conflict over the meaning and use of *lisoo*; indeed, he and another
teacher deliberately plotted together to force a confrontation and assert the superior
power of Isamoiso's first letter establishes two sets of oppositions: the power of the
Spirit of Jesus vs. the power of *lisoo*, and the power of *boekesi* vs. the power of *kanga*;
the narrative, of course, suggests the victory of the former over the latter. The second
letter by Tolanga reveals less conflict than negotiation over the meaning of terms.

"and then I learned their language and continued very well to talk to them and to give
them good thoughts." He relates a conversation with his school children's fathers
revealing the content of these good thoughts. When the fathers wanted the *boekesi*
to give their children *lisoo*, Tolanga responded ambiguously, first with a refusal, then
with an equation: "No, in the work of God, there is no *lisoo*. The only *lisoo* is to come
to *sukulu*."

Lititiyo, a third teacher, made no such equivalence. He instead extended a much
more complex grammar of oppositions and substitutions in a letter directly attacking
kanga and their therapeutic methods. The publication of his letter of 1922 coincided
with the beginning of medical missionary work at Yakusu, including nurse training,
and though Lititiyo was a teacher, his rhetoric is profoundly medicalized. Again, the
subject is the invalidity of *lisoo*, yet here the language of substitution alternates
between liturgical and biomedical practice. Lititiyo opposes *kanga* with European
doctors, and *kanga* horns (for mixing blood and medicines) with individualized
church cups (for receiving the blood of communion). The effect is to unite
communion ritual and medical care as parallel, linked forms of practice while
asserting that Christian practitioners were superior to those having "only one horn
and one medicine."[72]

The final two letters, written by Nurse Kamanga in 1933 and 1939 (nos. 6 and
7), exhibit strong continuities in the choice of subject matter among *baekesi* and *ba-infirmier* writers. The nurses' letters describe confrontations with *kanga* and their
clients over the meaning and use of *lisoo*. Yet the kinds of clashes and their settings
have changed. And the complexity of Lititiyo's grammar has vanished. There is no
longer careful, detailed reasoning, exposing what *kanga* do, and why European
medicine and Christian practice are superior in hygienic terms. In Kamanga's "Know
that the Use of Amulets is Not True", he relates an incident in a dispensary when a
missionary was present. *Basenji* life and *kanga* practice are condensed symbolically
into one object — a *likenge* or amulet; and Kamanga teams up with the Mama
missionary in a *dispensaire* to investigate bodies and expose this evidence of recourse
to *kanga*.[73] There is also laughter as the author aligns himself as if one among colonial
friends: "Me and the white man and Mama Bandombele laughed very hard." In
Kamanga's second letter, the Europeans have disappeared, but their common foe —
the embodiment of evil, the ever anonymous *kanga* — remains as does the amused
tone about these pagans who were swindled over a lost pig. Meanwhile, Kamanga
extends another hint on the politics and poetics of colonial lexical borrowing as he
lets it be known that he, like the *kanga* with his divining mirror (letter no. 7), also
possesses a *talatala*, the "talatala which has been called *microscope*" (letter no. 6).

The other two letters written by nurses (nos. 4 and 5) are not about combating
lisoo and *kanga*, but rather about the novelties of nursing work: the *dispensaire*
setting, mobility, surgery and bicycles. Nurse Liita, for example, devotes an entire
letter to his story of how he arrived in Yaongama. Most nurses worked in their own
dispensaries, where missionaries arrived only as occasional visitors and inspectors.
Teachers and nurses were mobile characters, moving as strangers, much like
colonizing missionaries, convening, convoking, "itinerating."[74] Nurse Liita's report on
his journey to his job in the Yaongama dispensary indicates that nurses travelled with
their families to accept such posts, and the letters, trucks and orders of white men
determined the itinerary. The idioms used to convey distinction between the
European truck owner and the Congolese cyclist-nurse — the *bosongo* (or *bwana*)

inverted, tendencies of lexical borrowing and naturalization of colonial figures and things, expressive of complex dynamics of domination, "going native" and "evolution" in colonial culture. Nurses may have been privileged characters who sometimes laughed alongside Europeans, yet they also took and followed orders. Their letters tend to report on the confrontations that were their challenge as they went. Yet there is no story of conflict nor "itineration" in Liita's letter. Rather, a 78-kilometer journey by bicycle in 1930 was sensational, and Nurse Liita simply shared this news.

Why was such a journey so spectacular? And were bicycles especially associated with nurses as Liita's letter suggests? Nurse Yenga's letter about his bicycle dream supports this impression. Yenga had threatened to never perform surgery again after his harrowing experience with a hemorrhaging patient, but then he dreamed voices during the night on his bed. The voices told him he could no more hide his medical talent than he could hide his bicycle in his house when he went on long trips to the colonial post of Yanonge, 78 kilometers away. The passage bears repeating:

> This is what they asked me when I was dreaming. "Why do you refuse this? If you are talented, if you have something which can heal, don't hide this. If you don't use this, for what good will you be? If you do, you will gain a good reputation for your talent. How come you are not going to work with your talent?"
>
> "If you have a bike which cost a lot of money, there is no way that you go to Yanonge with your feet. Would you leave your bike in your house? If it is so, you are really a fool in this matter. Because there is no reason to hide the bike in your house which is the helper of the feet for long trips." So like this these people I was speaking with [in the dream] placed this idea in my heart. Other people said, "If he knows that it is given to be ridden, then the owner of it should know he should dress in a wonderful manner."

Colonial lexical borrowing may have been poetic, but the poetics were historically concrete. Nurses may have been trained as evangelical workers at Yakusu, yet they were also educated to meet colonial state standards for an emerging category of professional health workers. Yakusu-trained *ba-infirmiers* possessed state-approved diplomas and received state-subsidized salaries. The choice of the term *infirmier* reflects, therefore, not only local evangelical semantics but also the seeping in of a state-authored word for a class of colonial workers.

Likewise, the seeping into the pages of *Mboli ya Tengai* of two letters about bicycles in the 1930s corresponds with a decade when the extension of commercial cultivation, forced peasant labor, notably in road construction and totalitarian-inspired, itinerant colonial hygiene converged. This mighty cluster of economic and social transformations amounted to the systematic remaking of Congolese rural social space in the name of "modernization,"[75] including in that part of the Bambole forest subject to Yakusu evangelization where the two letters in question were written. Foremost perhaps among this colonial revolution's panoply of accessory things were rural dispensaries and bicycles. All of these developments entered into the Bambole forest, these letters certainly tell, as if in one wondrous cycling piece. The 1930s was indeed a major decade for the "multiplication" of bicycles in the colony as well, and this swell in cycling directly paralleled the addition of roads.[76] These letter-writing nurses, whose work contributed to the colonizing and "modernizing" of the Bambole forest, were likely the first Congolese cyclists to ride the newly constructed colonial

roads that opened up the Bambole forest to rubber and coffee plantations, colonial hygienic surveillance and Yakusu evangelization in the same decade. At the same time as Bambole hunters and farmers were pressed into road-building gangs and plantation labor, the Yakusu missionaries, henceforth forbidden to use porters on medical tours, took to motorbikes;[77] while their *ba-infirmiers*, whom they assigned to operate newly constructed Yakusu-managed dispensaries like Yaongama, funded under tripartite agreements among the state, the mission and a new plantation company, cycled in on bicycles to perform their evangelical and nursing labor.

At Yaongama, rural health care arrived at precisely at the same time as forced road construction, and Yenga's letter reveals the attendant contestation. When he first arrived, he had many patients coming to his *dispensaire*, yet "[n]ow we do not see many of them. Truly the reason is their fear of the work of the White Men of the State that they are doing here" (letter no. 5). This fearful work was gang labor on the motor roads that the Bambole were forced to construct between the mid-1920s and the mid-1930s, the same period that the new coffee and rubber plantation company, *Bamboli Cultuur Maatschappij*, founded in 1929, expanded operations and recruitment through the Bambole forest. While Nurse Yenga wrote his letter, lamenting his lack of patients, worrying about his talent for surgery and dreaming of bicycles, missionaries were commenting on the problems that accompanied road construction and village relocation in the Bambole forest. There were "increased difficulties and restrictions on native travelling"[78] and most Bambole villages were "in a state of confusion,"[79] some being forced to move six times during the decade, "for the State and Companies are still not sure that they have chosen the best route for their roads."[80] The Bambole so hated the road work and their newly sited villages that many built secret villages: "In villages the people or some of them have gone back into the forest secretly and built a place for themselves and only come out to the main village when they hear that the State man is about!"[81]

The *Mboli ya Tengai* letters do not amplify this missionary-authored evidence about the creative Bambole answer to colonial "modernization", whereby peasants built dual social and economic spaces — those by the new motor roads and those at a remove from colonial surveillance. The letters do, however, disclose the immediate space of the *dispensaire* as seen through the eyes of the managing nurse: patients would come or not come as they negotiated daily concerns like road-building and pig-finding. Yet the letters of Yenga, Liita and Kamanga do not tell about how these road-builders and pig-owners may have measured the special skills and powers of nurses in their novel activities of surgical-opening and bicycle-riding.[82]

These Congolese-authored letters are precious sources, therefore, not because they are any more "authentic" than the voices of colonized memory or the tales of colonizers. Rather, these letters permit, in conjunction with a range of evidence, to see how these nurses' very words were contaminated[83] by their social proximity to missionaries and other European figures, and by their own privileged, colonizing, knowledge-brokering position within the colonial culture. Their words were contaminated, in a word, by bicycles. These letters are precious because the poetics of colonial lexical borrowing which they display enable a reading of the mixture of structured colonial domination and expressive autonomy contained in this colonial "lexeme," the bicycle.[84]

Yenga's dream evinced his sense of domination by his bicycle: it was his *kinga* that obliged him to continue to be nurse-like and do the terrifying work of opening bodies. In this sense, the bicycle impressed social and vocational identity upon him.

This identity-fixing contrivance also enabled independence in movement and fashion, never mind letters and whimsical dreams. Thus Liita was forced to cycle 78 kilometers per the orders of Mr Andrades, yet his journey over "very big and long hills" also inspired his informative letter. Likewise, the doctor gave Yenga a bicycle for his work, but he dreamed it as a *kinga* and "a helper of the feet for long trips."[85] And the voices in his dream coached that owning a bicycle was also his cue to create style: "if he knows that it is given to be ridden, then the owner of it should know he should dress in a wonderful manner." Bicycles perhaps were as instrumental to and symbolic of evangelical advancement as other things like communion cups, Bibles and cyst-removing surgical tools. Yet this colonial thing, which came as an instrument and obligation of the evangelical nurse's job,[86] was also a generic colonial commodity, a symbolic marker of *évolué* status,[87] a beautiful even wondrous technology, and a manner of dress; and as such, its activity — cycling — seems to have released greater latitude for expressive borrowing and creativity in the historical making of colonial *évolué* style.

Conclusion

These notes about evangelical workers, therapeutic conflict, letter-writing and bicycles call for a social history of nurses, mobility and colonial distinction, an immense proposition that has inspired this essay. The evidence presented suggests that if nursing was popular among the *ba-infirmier* of Yakusu and much less so in Stanleyville during the inter-war period, part of the reason may lie in the very issues raised by the Stanleyville schoolboys' complaints and the *Mboli ya Tengai* letters, issues of autonomy, identity, leisure and style — all encapsulated in the image of the bicycle. Whether the bicycle was indeed a colonial object with a "social life"[88] that came to signify the work and play of colonial nursing men throughout the Belgian Congo remains to be established. There was certainly not a unitary identity for nurses in the inter-war period in the Belgian Congo. Nor were nurses the only colonial subjects who rode bicycles. This essay may conclude only that bicycles were as salient as missionary medicine and clinical life in composing the social identity and imaginary of Yakusu-trained *ba-infirmiers* in the Belgian Congo.

Whereas serving as a nurse in an urban setting like Stanleyville involved forms of discipline and supervisory control that made it unappealing and degrading work, evangelical nursing in a British Baptist mission district in many ways resembled evangelical teaching. Both were honorable, prestigious forms of intellectual and practical labor that offered ample opportunities for reading and writing, independence and leisure. The identities of Yakusu-affiliated nurses were formed in the mission training hospital, but also in evangelical healing work in rural outposts, including in rural dispensaries. Yet what distinguished *infirmier* letters from teachers' letters in *Mboli ya Tengai* was not the use of hygiene as evangelical metaphor. Indeed, both claimed and asserted the antinomies of *kanga* and Christian healer (whether *bonganga* or *infirmier*), *lisoo* and Christian practice (whether communion or surgery). What distinguishes the letters of *baekesi* and *ba-infirmier* is the colonial poetics of lexical borrowing, that is, the inclusion of a repertory of words, images and activities borrowed from the novelties of a colonial situation and expressive of the distinctive style of an emerging s[illegible]ial category: technical clinical [illegible] surgical acts (whether removing cysts o[illegible] enge) and a colonial thing, the

letters, perform surgery and ride — and dream — about bicycles. Indeed, these *Mboli ya Tengai* letters written by a small group of evangelical Protestant nurses in the 1930s anticipate what may have been the fashion of most colonial nursing men by the 1950s: dressing up and cycling.

NOTES

[1] This essay would have not been possible without the kind, generous, and expert assistance of my friend and colleague, Dr. Osumaka Likaka, History Department, Hunter College, who did almost all the intellectual work of translating these and other Lokele texts during a couple of weeks toiling together in June 1993 in New York City. His interpretive insights continue to be invaluable. I am also grateful to Bob Harms, Joe Miller and David Newbury for terrifically helpful critical comments on a very early draft.

[2] The creative force and autonomy of the collective social (and historical) imagination; see Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge, 1987).

[3] The term is from Barbara Yates, "Knowledge brokers: books and publishers in early colonial Zaire," *History in Africa*, xiv (1987), 311-40; see note 37 below.

[4] Nursing was not codified as a colonial vocation until the early 1920s; the female category of *accoucheuse* was institutionalized at the same time. Male African nurses remained more numerous in the African medical profession than female midwives and nursing sisters in the Belgian Congo throughout the colonial period; indeed, as Catherine Burns kindly pointed out to me, Zaire may be unique in post-colonial Africa in that it is male nurses who symbolize primary health care, including infant care, in official health documents. See H. Vanderyst, "L'enseignement élémentaire médical pour indigènes, á tous ses degrés, au Congo Belge," *L'aide médicale aux missions*, I (1929), 76-80; Belgian Congo, *Rapports sur l'hygiène publique*, 1925, 1927-47. On post-colonial Zaire, see Franklin C. Baer, "The primary health care strategy in Zaire" (Unpublished manuscript, c. 1985); and Nancy Rose Hunt, "Birth certificates, soap, and enemas: pregnant women and post-colonial birth routines in Mobutuland, 1989-90" (Paper presented to the 1993 Institute on Health and Demography, Program on International Cooperation in Africa, Northwestern University, 4 March 1993).

[5] Jean-Luc Vellut, "Le médecine européenne dans l'État Indépendant du Congo (1885-1908)," in P. G. Janssens, M. Kivits and J. Vuylsteke (eds.), *Analecta de réalisations médicales en Afrique Centrale, 1885-1985* (Brussels, 1991), 61-81, esp. 71, 75, 78-9. Similarly, nurses, their individual reputations, and personalities emerge in Vaughan's study of biomedical discourse in East and Central Africa only when she considers the missionary journals of medical missions; Megan Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Stanford, 1991). On missionary narratives and the domestic formation of B.M.S. Yakusu nurses, see Nancy Rose Hunt, "Colonial fairy tales and the knife and fork doctrine in the heart of Africa," in Karen Tranberg Hansen (ed.), *African Encounters with Domesticity* (New Brunswick NJ, 1992), 143-71.

[6] A similar argument can be made concerning scholarly interest in the roles and identities of European doctors and nurses; it is the women who have received the attention. See, for example, Pat Holden, "Colonial sisters: nurses in Uganda," in Pat Holden and Jenny Littlewood (eds.), *Anthropology and Nursing* (London, 1991), 67-83; and Bridget M. Robertson, *Angels in Africa: A Memoir of Colonial Nursing* (London, 1993). A comparative historical study on when, where, and why nursing was gendered male or female is needed. On African midwives (in Central and East Africa, where nursing was primarily male work), see Carol Summers, "Intimate colonialism: the imperial production of reproduction in Uganda, 1907-1925," *Signs*, xvi (1991), 787-807; Megan Vaughan, Curing their Ills; and Nancy Rose Hunt, "Negotiated colonialism: domesticity, hygiene, and birth work in the Belgian Congo" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin — Madison, 1992). On African women nurses (and in the latter southern African case at least, in a place where the nursing profession was predominantly female), see Kathleen Eddy Sheldon, "Working women in Beira, Mozambique" (Ph.D. thesis, University of California — Los Angeles, 1988); and Shula Marks, "The nursing profession and the making [illegible]partheid," in Philip Bonner, Peter Delius, and Deborah Posel (eds.), *Apartheid's Genesis* [illegible]raamfontein, Johannesburg, 1993), 341-61.

faite à l'école primaire et professionelle," H (4388) 36, M. H. 76, Stan[leyville], 3 septembre 1927, Archives Africaines, Brussels [hereafter AA]. A note in the margin by Moeller indicates that item no. 11 was "the fault of the direction of the school".

[8] The document does note the distinctiveness of *arabisé* opinion; reasons nos. 8, 9 and 11 "were given by *arabisé*". These Muslim *bangwana* residents settled here permanently as cultivators and traders following the "Arab wars" of 1892-4 and increasingly participated in the wage-earning economy of the city. See Valdo Pons, *Stanleyville: An African Urban Community under Belgian Administration* (London, 1969), 22.

[9] Willy De Craemer and Renée C. Fox, *The Emerging Physician: A Sociological Approach to the Development of a Congolese Medical Profession* (Hoover Institution Series no. 19) (Stanford, 1968), 15.

[10] *Ibid.* 16-17. On the history of the category "native medical assistant", see also *ibid.*

[11] Maryinez Lyons, *The Colonial Disease: A Social History of Sleeping Sickness in Northern Zaire, 1900-1940* (Cambridge, 1992).

[12] It certainly was for European medical workers; for a fascinating account disclosing the appeal of the itinerant nature of colonial medical work in the 1930s, see A. Duren, "Quelques aspects de la vie médicale au Congo Belge," extract from *Le Scalpel*, nos. 2-5 (12, 19, 26 Jan. and 2 Feb. 1935). On the mobile campaigns of the 1920s, see Lyons, *The Colonial Disease*.

[13] Rapport sanitaire et d'hygiène de la zone de Stanleyville pendant le trimestre juillet-septembre 1905," H (837); "Rapport ... juillet-septembre 1908," H (837), AA.

[14] Dr. Veroni, "Rapport ... janvier-mars 1909, H (837); "Rapport ... 1er trimestre 1910," H (837); Dr. Veroni, "Rapport sanitaire sur le 2 semestre de l'année 1910," H (841), AA.

[15] Chef du Service Médical Commermeyer to Monsieur le Gouverneur Général, 16 June 1910, H (831), N 176; RA/CB (81) 1, Rapport sur l'hygiène publique, Province Orientale, 1913, p. 6, AA.

[16] Inspection de Stanleyville par Monsieur l'Inspecteur d'État de Meulemeester," 1913, H (833); and "Hygiène - District de Stanleyville," N 10/16; RA/CB, Service de l'Hygiène, Rapport annuel, 1923, 3.

[17] H (4440) 697: "Ecoles pour infirmiers de couleur au Congo," 26 Oct. 1920; "Ecoles de formation d'Assistants Médicaux Indigènes," 27 Nov. 1920; and unsigned letter to Governor General, n.d., AA.

[18] M. Moeller, "Remarques," 16 Oct. 1926, H (4348) 35, AA.

[19] Ministre des Colonies Jasper to Governor General, 10 Sept. 1928, H (4348) 35, MH/52, AA.

[20] Annexe à M.H. 37, Rapport d'inspection médicale et hygiènique de Stanleyville, 6 novembre et de décembre 1927, par le Médecin en Chef, Dr. G. Trolli, March 1928, H (4388), AA.

[21] A. de Meulemeester, "L'organisation des dispensaires ruraux de l'Oeuvre A.D.I.P.O (Assistance aux Dispensaires Indigènes de la Province Orientale)," *Congo*, IX (1928), 1-12.

[22] Dr. Veroni to Governor General, July 1909, H (837), AA.

[23] C. C. Chesterman, "The Ba-infirmier," *Yakusu Quarterly Notes*, no. 61 (Jan. 1925), 5-9, esp. 5.

[24] Gouverneur Moeller, "Note concernant le rapport de M. le Médecin en Chef concernant le chef lieu de Stanleyville et les dispensaires ruraux de district," 14 August 1928, H (4388) 35, M.H. 46, AA.

[25] The Yakusu nursing school received official state affiliation status in 1932 and began to be reimbursed for training government-hired nurses in 1937; C. C. Chesterman to M. l'Administrateur Général des Colonies, 17 Dec. 1937, H (4440) 698 "Ecoles d'Infirmiers et d'Assistants médicaux indigènes," AA.

[26] C. C. Chesterman, "The training and employment of African natives as medical assistants," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, XXV (1931-2), pt. III: 1067-76, esp. 1073.

[27] S. G. Browne, "The training of medical auxiliaries in the former Belgian Congo," *The Lancet*, 19 May 1973, 1103-5, esp. 1104.

[28] During research at Yakusu and in the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) Archives, I collected copies of the linguistic material that enabled this translation project, including the only English-Lokele dictionary; sundry French-Lokele word lists; a partial and unpublished Lokele-English dictionary (only letters A-L were ever printed!); several missionary-authored Lokele grammars, including the most detailed by John Carrington, a BMS missionary, linguist and botanist, who studied local languages, forest healing practices and the contents of *Mboli ya Tengai*; and Carrington's collection of Lokele proverbs. See: W. Millman, *Vocabulary of Ekele: The Congo Belge Language Spoken by the Lokele Tribe Living between Yanjali and Stanleyville, Congo Belge* (Yakusu, 1926); J. F. Carrington, "The tonal structure of Kele (Lokele)," *African Studies* (Dec.

Oxford. Lokele was also one of the languages included in W. H. Stapleton, *Comparative Handbook of Congo Languages* (Yakusu, 1903).

[29] Yates, "Knowledge brokers," 322-3. On the mission's choice of Lokele as the church *lingua franca* rather than Kingwana and on the mission's literary production, 1900-8, see H. Sutton Smith, *Yakusu, The Very Heart of Africa, Being Some Account of the Protestant Mission at Stanley Falls, Upper Congo* (London, n.d.), 153-60.

[30] A. G. Mill, "The radiance spreads," *Yakusu Quarterly Notes*, no. 152 (Oct. 1955): 5-8, esp. 7. I have been unable to locate evidence on the numbers printed, nor is it clear if there was a subscription fee.

[31] Among recent examples of these various methodologies are the following. For oral history, Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago, 1990), esp. 21. For (variously interpreted) "life stories" or "life histories", Belinda Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (Portsmouth NH, 1991); Bogumil Jewsiewicki (ed.), *Naître et mourir au Zaïre: un demi-siècle d'histoire au quotidien* (Paris, 1993); Sarah Mirza and Margaret Strobel (eds.), *Three Swahili Women: Life Histories from Mombasa, Kenya* (Bloomington, 1989); and Marcia Wright, *Strategies of Slaves and Women: Life-Stories from East/Central Africa* (New York, 1993). For song, Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Power and the Praise Poem: South African Voices in History* (Charlottesville, 1993); and Léon Verbeek, "L'histoire dans les chants et les danses populaires: la zone culturelle Bemba du Haut-Shaba (Zaïre)," *Enquêtes et documents d'histoire africaine*, X (1992). For popular paintings, Bogumil Jewsiewicki, "Peintres de cases, imagiers et savants populaires du Congo, 1900-1960: un essai d'histoire de l'esthétique indigène," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, XXXI (1991), 307-26; and *idem* (ed.), *Art pictural zaïrois* (Les nouveaux cahiers du CELAT, no. 3) (Québec, 1992). For photographs, Jan Vansina, "Photographs of the Sankuru and Kasai River Basin Expedition undertaken by Emil Torday (1876-1931) and M. W. Hilton Simpson (1881-1936)," in Elizabeth Edwards (ed.), *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920* (London, 1992), 193-205; and Christraud Geary (guest ed.), "Historical photographs of Africa," special issue of *African Arts*, XXIV (1991). And for sculpted objects, Mary Nooter, "Luba art and polity: creating power in a central African kingdom" (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1991).

[32] As rare as those drawing on oral testimony collected in Europe. For attempts to use oral history evidence collected in Europe among former colonial residents, see Hunt, "Negotiated colonialism;" and Jean-Luc Vellut, "Une exécution publique à Elisabethville (20 septembre 1922): notes sur la pratique de la peine capitale dans l'histoire coloniale du Congo," in Bogumil Jewsiewicki (ed.), *Art pictural zaïrois* (Les Nouveaux Cahiers du CELAT, no. 3) (Québec, 1992), 171-222. Likewise, the use of African-authored texts has usually meant "user-friendly" documents written in colonial languages, as, for example, in my use of *évolué*-authored French texts in "Noise over camouflaged polygamy, colonial morality, taxation, and a woman-naming crisis in Belgian Africa," *Journal of African History*, XXXII (1991), 471-94. The study of African literacy in Malagasy may be an important exception; see Françoise Raison-Jourde, "L'échange inégal de la langue: la pénétration des techniques linguistiques dans une civilisation de l'oral (Imerina, début du XIXe siècle)," *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*, XXXII (1977), 639-69; and Maurice Bloch, "Literacy and enlightenment," in Karen Schousboe and Mogens Trolle Larsen (eds.), *Literacy and Society* (Copenhagen, 1989), 15-37.

[33] They include several letters from the Swedish Protestant mission bulletin, *Minsamu Miayenge*, written by Christian Kongo catechists in the 1890s; John M. Janzen, and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, no. 5) (Lawrence, Kansas, 1974), 13, 107-111.

[34] Johannes Fabian, *History from Below: The "Vocabulary of Elisabethville" by André Yav; Texts, Translations, and Interpretive Essay* (Amsterdam, 1990).

[35] On "boy"-to-nurse career trajectories at the Yakusu mission, see Hunt, "Colonial fairy tales". The domestic servants who commissioned the "Vocabulary of Elisabethville" attested to the inclusive quality of the colonial category "boy;" in their history, *infirmiers* as well as soldiers, butchers, and policemen are identified as "boys": Fabian, *History from Below*, 120-1.

[36] An approach favored in Janzen and MacGaffey, *Anthology of Kongo Religion*; and, more particularly, in John M. Janzen, "The consequences of literacy in African religion: the Kongo case," in Wim van Binsbergen and Matthew Schoffeleers (eds.), *Theoretical Explorations in African Religion* (London, 1985), 225-52. Fabian, in contrast, argues that there are "no fundamental differences in the structure of oral and written texts", but perhaps a "special tension between orality and literacy in situations such as obtained when the "Vocabulary" was produced"; Fabian, *History from Below*, 178

[37] In her study of African-language material printed by missions in the Congo Independent State, focusing on Bible translations, school primers, and other instructional material, Yates argued that these were "printed communications between Westerners and Africans," and that missionary publishers had "a monopolistic position as *brokers of knowledge* between their own brand of Western culture and that of the African populations with whom they interacted". Emphasis added. Yates overlooks the wealth of those mission-printed materials mentioned in a footnote: there were at least five church magazines published by various missions, both Protestant and Catholic, in this period. Yates, "Knowledge brokers," 311, 332-3, and 338, note 45. Similar assumptions about the brokering of knowledge may be found in: Hakiza Serufuri, "Les auxiliaires autochtones des missions protestantes au Congo, 1878-1960. Etude de cinq sociétés missionnaires" (Ph.D. thesis, Université Catholique de Louvain, 1984), 481.
[38] Osumaka Likaka and I worked together to compose translations that accurately reflect the content, intent, and colloquial quality of the prose. Punctuation was changed in the translations to make them more intelligible; capitalization was maintained.
[39] "Lokasa loa M. Isamoiso wa Yangembe," *Mboli ya Tengai*, no. 79 (Dec. 1916), 2.
[40] Teacher; my Lokele teacher called herself my *boekesi*. The term, however, would be glossed by the Yakusu missionaries to read "teacher-evangelist".
[41] Loanword from English: school. Emphasis on loanwords added; all are from French unless otherwise indicated.
[42] "Lokasa loa Tolanga wa Yalongolo," *Mboli ya Tengai*, no. 87 (July 1917).
[43] These letters were likely "pay cards"; Hunt, "Negotiated colonialism," 161.
[44] "Lokasa loa Tolanga wa Yalongolo," *Mboli ya Tengai*, no. 87 (July 1917).
[45] "Lokasa loa Lititiyo ende baina," Mboli ya Tengai, no. 130 (Sept. 1922), 8.
[46] Medicine; either a powder, mixture made of leaves, or a liquid.
[47] *Kanga's* horn for mixing and holding medicine.
[48] Also the word for food.
[49] To apply medicine through cuts in the skin.
[50] Meaning unclear.
[51] *Kangasu*, *"our kanga,"* derogatory expression.
[52] Loanword probably most directly from Kingwana, although the same word for bicycle was found in many languages in Belgian colonial Africa from the 1920s, including Lingala and Kirundi, but not in standard Swahili. Further research on the origin, distribution, and meaning of this loanword, including tracking down Jan Vansina's hunch that *kinga* comes from "circle" (while it means "raphia bracelet" in Bushong) and may have spread from the Lower Congo rather than from Shaba, is planned. Thanks also to David Schoenbrun who has been immensely helpful with comparative linguistic advice. The earliest dictionary reference I have yet discovered for kinga as bicycle is in John and L. F. Whitehead, *Manuel de Kingwana, le dialecte occidental de Swahili* (Wayika, Congo Belge, 1928), 120. See also, "kinga" as a "ki-Ngwana" bicycle attestation only in Ch. Sacleux, *Dictionnaire Swahili-Français* (Paris, 1939), 384. The Yakusu missionaries used Kingwana in their initial efforts to evangelize the district, until they learned Lokele, and even then resorted to Swahili for words with no Lokele equivalent; Sutton Smith, *Yakusu*, 153-6.
[53] Loanword from Kingwana; lord, master, sir. Whitehead, *Manuel de Kingwana*, 91
[54] Acronym for the Baptist Missionary Society.
[55] "Lokasa loa Liita Infirmier," *Mboli ya Tengai*, no. 213 (Feb. 1930), 2.
[56] Mr. Andrade may have been a colonial agent, yet was more likely a Belgian planter working in the area for the Bamboli company that had coffee and rubber plantations in the region.
[57] The precise Biblical reference is unclear here.
[58] White Men "of the state," from the French, *l'État*.
[59] Surgical operation, here placed first in French (*opération*), and then defined with a Lokele idiom, "the work of splitting". The idiom "*likuwa lia kembe*" — "the work of the knife" — was also common, and perhaps preferred by Yakusu missionaries, who made an announcement about hospital procedures with this figure in 1939: "Hopital nda Yakusu," *Mboli ya Tengai*, no. 388 (Dec. 1939), 1.
[60] The local idiom for "white doctor," formed not from the Lokele word kanga for healer, but again likely from the Kingwana word, *munganga*, with a Lokele prefix. See Whitehead, *Manuel de Kingwana*, 146.
[61] "Lokasa loa Victor Yenga," *Mboli ya Tengai*, no. 291 (Aug. 1931), 6-7.
[62] The writer was likely Lokele, and this stereotype of forest people, and especially the

[63] A different way of referring to a "*Bosongo ba l'état*," expressed through the Lingala term (*Mondele*) combined with a Lingala-ization of the Lokele term for White Person, *Bosongo*.
[64] Borrowed from the Kingwana, *mushenzi*, "barbarian, uncivilized person, churl, savage, heathen"; Whitehead, *Manuel de Kingwana*, 148.
[65] "Lokasa loa Kamanga Samwele, Waluwa kenge etiwe," *Mboli ya Tengai*, no. 310 (March 1935).
[66] Meaning obscure.
[67] The Kingwana term for French franc; see Whitehead, *Manuel de Kingwana*, 97.
[68] Samuel Kamanga, "Bolimbi asotombolomo," *Mboli ya Tengai*, no. 381 (May 1938), 6.
[69] Christian Africans in the district were avid readers from the first years in the century; in 1905, the mission sold 10,000 books. Yates, "Knowledge Brokers," 321. By the 1920s, mission hygiene lessons advised that good Christians did not read or write "at night by the aid of a palm-oil flare". W. Millman, "Health instruction in African schools: suggestions for a curriculum," *Africa*, III (1930), 484-99, esp. 489. By the 1950s, one *infirmier* toured the district regularly, likely by bicycle, to do refractions so older readers could obtain reading glasses: "With the increase in the numbers of readers who were ageing, the correction of errors of refraction by the provision of appropriate lenses was a much-appreciated service". Browne, "Training of medical auxiliaries," 1104.
[70] "A poetic conception of borrowing could also be a starting point for a rhetoric of lexical borrowing understood as a way of translating relationships of power and domination into discourse"; Johannes Fabian, "Scratching the surface: observations on the poetics of lexical borrowing in Shaba Swahili," *Anthropological Linguistics*, XXIV (1982), 14-50, esp. 28 and 39.
[71] In creating a new Lokele word from the Kingwana word (*munganga*), distance was maintained from the Lokele word for healer, *kanga*. As for the pride, see the biography by Sylvia Duncan and Peter Duncan, *Bonganga: Experiences of a Missionary Doctor* (London, 1958).
[72] Clement C. Chesterman, "The training and employment of African natives as medical assistants," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, XXV (1932-3), Part III: 1067-76.
[73] Missionary letters, published in English in the *Yakusu Quarterly Notes* report on similar scenes, suggesting that the Mama missionary likely investigated the likenge while making the medical decisions as well. Hunt, "Negotiated colonialism".
[74] A favorite Yakusu missionary word to describe their evangelical touring within an assigned circuit.
[75] On the system of "modernization" devised in the 1930s, including the extension of commercial cultivation and forced peasant labor in road construction and compulsory cultivation, see Bogumil Jewsiewicki, "Rural society and the Belgian colonial economy," in David Birmingham and Phyllis M. Martin (eds.), *History of Central Africa* (2 vols.) (London, 1983), ii, 95-125, esp. 110-16. On how rural mobile hygiene was imbricated in this system in the Bambole forest, see Hunt, "Negotiated colonialism," 140-85. New legislation obliging employers to provide medical care for their workers and passed in 1930 was key here as was the role of the new program of "native medical assistance," FOREAMI, also founded in 1930, as a model for "itinerant" colonial medicine. On the legislation, see G. Trolli, *Exposé de la législation sanitaire du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi* (Brussels, 1938), 65-6; on the Fonds Reine Elisabeth d'Assistance Médicale aux Indigènes as a model for one "itinerant" doctor, see Duren, "Quelques aspects de la vie médicale au Congo Belge". On the "totalitarian phantasms" that inspired FOREAMI, see Jean-Luc Vellut, "Détresse matérielle et découvertes de la misère dans les colonies belges d'Afrique centrale, ca. 1900-1960," in Michel Dumoulin and Eddy Stols (eds.) *La Belgique et l'étranger aux XIXe et XXe siècles* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1987), 147-85, esp. 171.
[76] There were 947 bicycles in the Congo in 1925; 18,784 in 1929; 18,626 in 1933; 30,469 in 1937; and 52,206 in 1939. C. Hauzeur de Fooz, *Un démi-siècle avec l'économie du Congo Belge* (Brussels, n.d.), 18.
[77] C. C. Chesterman, "Medical itinerating on a motor bike," *Yakusu Quarterly Notes*, no. 103 (Oct. 1935), 17-19. On the history of the Bambole forest more generally and the role of Yakusu medical missionaries as state sanitary agents in charge of this colonial hygienic surveillance, see Hunt, "Negotiated colonialism," 140-85.
[78] BMS Yakusu Annual Report, 1925.
[79] H. B. Parris, "Yaongama," *Yakusu Quarterly Notes*, no. 57 (Jan. 1924), 21-3.
[80] Gladys Parris to Miss Bowser, 5 Feb. 1936, G. Owen file, BMS Archives, Regent's Park College, Oxford.

[82] One former cotton-cultivating informant commented to Osumaka Likaka, in his research in north-eastern Zaire, on the privilege and prestige surrounding this luxury item in cotton-producing areas, where bicycles were used as production premiums: "Someone having a bicycle in a village was distinguished from the rest. It was like someone owning an airplane". Osumaka Likaka, "Forced cotton cultivation and social control in colonial Zaire" (unpublished manuscript, n.d.), 15. With thanks to Likaka for drawing this to my attention.

[83] Kathleen Stewart, "On the politics of cultural theory: a case for 'contaminated' cultural critique," *Social Research*, LVIII (Summer 1991), 395-412.

[84] I am grateful to David Newbury for the critical suggestions that inspired the development of this section.

[85] More research is planned on the loanword *kinga*; see note 52 above.

[86] As was noted above, post-war welfare funding ensured each dispensary was equipped with a monthly allowance and bicycle, and the *Mboli ya Tengai* letters that bicycles were introduced as necessary equipment in the 1930s; see note 26.

[87] Bicycles were integral to the semiotics of *évolué* life in Belgian colonial Africa by the 1950s. On "fancy bicycles" and the semiotics of *évolué* culture, see Hunt, "Noise over camouflaged polygamy," 471-94, esp. 493. See also F. Ramirez and C. Rolot, *Histoire du cinéma colonial au Zaïre, au Rwanda, et au Burundi* (Tervuren, 1985).

[88] Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986).

REVELATION, ILLUMINATION AND THE IMAGE OF CHRIST IN THE KGALAGADI[1]

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Do visual images present stable meanings which cross personal and cultural boundaries? Or: What is the nature of seeing "an" image? This is a crucial question, not only for psychologists or literary theorists, but for historians of colonialism. For one thing, the art of mechanically reproducing figurative images matured exactly as the "colonial moment" happened.[2] For another, the new colonialism (like previous ones) was part of a process in which human beings forcibly reintroduced themselves to their relatives — across the cultural and racial boundaries of the day — and then attempted to subordinate them. In this giant family reunion, as in most others since then, pictures played an important part. Indigenous peoples were exposed to pictures, and exposed in pictures to patriarchal viewing. Scholars have recently begun to evaluate the second half of this exchange, focussing on the photography of the colonized.[3] Yet much more needs to be considered.

In fact, there has been almost no attention paid to the transient, fragile meanings arising from images within colonial "moments" themselves. To understand how such meanings were generated is to fathom a critical part of the peculiar colonial relationship between picturing and doing. In one sense people can discern, or elucidate, only what they can express. Yet in another sense vision is a universal, and it is just the process of seeing and expressing which creates new ways of doing both. This essay juxtaposes two sets of experiences, in Botswana, of the image of Christ. The first is a "magic lantern" show; the second is a "vision." Together they throw some light on the world around them.

An Illumination

In February and March of 1921, the Rev. Ernest Dugmore travelled throughout the central Kgalagadi desert by ox-wagon. With him were a Tswana minister, Tsibalala Malaane, and an elder from the Kanye (Ngwaketse) Church, whom he called Peco. Recorded memory of the journey apparently survives only in Dugmore's typescript accounts, in the archives of the London Missionary Society (the LMS).[4]

> I spent a fortnight among the people trekking about from village to village, preaching by day and showing the Life of Christ by night by means of a Magic Lantern. The interest was intense. One could feel the soul-hunger, the thirst for more knowledge.[5]

In Lokgwabe (pop. 300), on 25 February,