CHAPTER 1

Four Ways of Not Saying Something in Digital Kinshasa

Or, On the Substance of Shadow Conversations

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Posting for Someone Else

This chapter studies cryptopolitics on social media sites such as Facebook, Messenger (Lite and Free, *mode gratuit*),[1] WhatsApp, Instagram, and in lesser fashion the app imo (free video calls and chat). I am concerned with the various layers of hiding and concealing that inform social media practices of Kinois (inhabitants from Kinshasa). On 24 February 2019, Pitshou,[2] an unmarried man in his late twenties, published the following text, written in French, and set in black, bold arial font, against a sober, green background, on his WhatsApp status (a facility of the WhatsApp application, which allows users to post images, photographs, and videos that disappear after twenty-four hours): "If someone shows you that s/he can live without you, then show him/her that you can live without him/her" (my translation from the French).

Contextual information was lacking. There was no caption nor any adjacent posts (as WhatsApp statuses allow, see below) that could help the reader interpret the statement as a communication to an intended receiver. The message raised questions such as: to whom is this addressed? Was something going on in Pitshou's life? Was he disappointed in someone? I knew he was in an unstable relationship with the mother of his daughter and expected a new episode in their on/off relationship. When I called Pitshou, I learned to my surprise that the text did not speak about his personal life, but was embedded in the complex intimate life of one of his male friends, Jeancy.

About two years earlier, Jeancy, like Pitshou also in his late twenties, had migrated temporarily to Brazzaville, the capital city of the neighboring Congo. During his year and a half stay there, he had begun a sexual liaison with a woman in Brazzaville. Upon his return, Jeancy wanted to

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pick up his previous relationship with Tina, a girl in Kinshasa. As often happens by Kinois standards, he had never formally cut off that link. However, while he was still in Brazzaville, Tina had learned through the grapevine about Jeancy's involvement with this other woman, and she had decided to move on. She had done so quietly, never informing Jeancy about her decision. The latter therefore had every reason to hope he would be able to reconnect quickly upon his return to Kinshasa. Even nine months after Jeancy's homecoming, so Pitshou told me, Tina did not answer Jeancy's calls, leaving him in sorrow and pain.

It so happened then that a few days before posting that message on WhatsApp, Pitshou encountered Tina in a bar in his neighborhood. She was accompanied by another man who she presented to Pitshou as "her fiancé," using the French word, thus announcing that she was in a deep, committed relationship with this man, which may lead to marriage. At least, she wanted to convey such message. The introduction had been a provocation, almost an insult, so Pitshou told me, especially because she knew that Jeancy and Pitshou were close friends, almost like brothers. Presenting the other man to Pitshou as her fiancé was like presenting the man to Jeancy as her fiancé, an action unheard of. After all, even if many men and women in Kinshasa entertain multiple sexual and romantic relationships, dating requires the public performance of monogamy and fidelity.[3] By introducing a man as her fiancé, Pitshou argued, Tina was literally showing that she can live without her former boyfriend. Pitshou had related the information and advice to do the same to Jeancy already in a face to face conversation, but felt the need to remind Jeancy also via other channels, such as the WhatsApp status updates. "That is what good friends do," so Pitshou reminded me in a WhatsApp audiovoice message.

Pitshou's publication on his WhatsApp status was intended to be advice (Lingala, *liteya*, "lesson") directly addressed to his friend. Though, significantly, neither Jeancy's nor Tina's names were mentioned. Pitshou, so he confided laughingly, deliberately played with this ambiguity because some of his siblings and relatives, of whom he considers several as his classificatory fathers, are also his WhatsApp contacts. He did not want to reveal too much information about his friend's intimate life.[4] After all, friends usually know about each other's love life and are expected to protect each other's reputation. Pitshou's laughter betrayed a slyness in his digital dexterity.

The opening anecdote does not speak of an idiosyncrasy of Pitshou nor is obscuring names of addressees in social media communication a gendered practice. As Flavie, a young woman in her early thirties and one of the protagonists of this chapter told me, "every day, at least one of

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my status updates is addressed to a particular person. Every single day," even though she never mentions a person's name, except for specific congratulations or condolences. Flavie also reads others' status updates and online posts of memes, proverbs, and excerpts of songs and clips as possible locutions about others' unfolding social lives. For most "digital Kinois,"[5] indeed, social media expressions are readily understood as carrying a metonymic relationship with the poster's personal lifeworld.

What emerges from the above is that Pitshou and Flavie, like so many other digital Kinois, play with the said and unsaid, the alluded and implied, the shown and hidden on social media. The described actions belong to a complex set of "idioms of practice," that is, appropriate social uses of technology that have been formed by asking advice and sharing stories with each other about benefits and risks of certain ways of engaging with social media (Gershon 2010: 6).[6]

As will become clear in this chapter, these Kinois idioms of practice, which I describe as *benda bilili na toile*, literally "pulling images on the internet," mirror offline behavior. These are crucial strategies in the negotiating of relationships in Kinshasa in daily life. *Benda bilili* ("pulling the images") is a social dictum that governs social life in the city and with which Kinois are familiar.

In this chapter, I explore the relationships between digital texts (such as the advice Pitshou gave), their cryptic aesthetics, and the social lifeworlds in which these texts find meaning, circulate, and which they maybe even transform. It will become clear that social media usage in Kinshasa is very much embedded in negotiations and calibrations of hiding information, playing with double meanings, and double-crossing. Digital Kinois purposely manipulate the distinction between the surface (the screen, what is said and shown online) and the underneath (the offline, what is meant by what is said). Silencing names of intended receivers of public digital posts is a strategy of protection and is fully embedded within infopolitics (Bernal 2014) governing Kinois sociality. This means that among digital contacts, some are intended receivers of a social media post while others are not but have access to these posts as well because of the simple fact that they are Facebook friends, Instagram followers, or WhatsApp contacts. The presence of one (or more) Receiver-Who-Is-Not-Addressed is significant here, as it adds weight to the seriousness of the message. Receivers-Who-Are-Not-Addressed become invited observers to, in the case of Pitshou and Tina, a conflict in which they do not have any stakes. Yet, suddenly they witness a problem and engage in processes of encoding and decoding messages. They also "pull the images."

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To make sense of the ethnographic material, I combine insights from linguistic anthropology, political anthropology, and anthropology of the occult (in particular, divination, witchcraft, and religion). These may seem disparate fields, though most Africanists know that words and communication are intimately entangled with power and spirits. Politics and religion in sub-Saharan Africa thrive on balancing disclosure and concealment, revealing and withdrawing, opening and closing (Ellis and ter Haar 2003; Ferme 2001; Geschiere 1998; Jacobson-Widding 1990; Werbner 2015). Such understandings of the power of the hidden and the occult also feed into Kinois' online actions, for example, posting proverbs, commenting on status updates, or not commenting at all but sending a screen shot to a friend.

This chapter also has a more methodological ambition. As anthropologists, we try to understand how to explore digital materials and especially how to relate these to "offline" experiences and realities. I argue we should not remain "stuck" in the online-offline divide, but try to understand how this divide, difference, or even gap is used, played with, and even mobilized by our interlocutors. To do so, I propose the method of "reconstructing shadow conversations" in line with Judith Irvine's elaboration of "shadow conversations" in Xarxaar insult poetry (1996). This method also bears relevance beyond Kinshasa's ethnography and may inspire a new way of studying digital culture.

In the first part of this chapter, I discern four different categories in cryptic digital communication that beg Kinshasa's social media users for elaborate exegesis and offline hermeneutics: the not yet said, the almost said, the not said, and the loudly said. These are etic categories inspired by discussions with my interlocutors. In the second part, I reconstruct various "shadow conversations" of social media posts published by Flavie. I try to illustrate the thick dialogue between online and offline worlds. In the final part, I situate the method of "shadow conversations" within Congolese ethnography and differentiate between "conversations of the shadow" and "conversations in the shadow." I will draw parallels between social media practices and indigenous notions of personhood and cosmology.

The material for this chapter has been collected online and offline continuously since 2014 when I began researching the dialectics between technology and urban sociality through participant observation in online communication and by interviewing interlocutors about their idioms of practice. I followed people's social media posts, took screen shots, and asked them to narrate stories about their posts. Most of these conversations took place in Kinshasa, in one-on-one conversations.

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Since the COVID-19 pandemic (2020), I resorted to informal interviews over private social media platforms. This analysis is limited to posts with social content. Politically and religiously inflected electronic messages and images harbor other forms of cryptic aesthetics (see, among others, Pype 2016b and 2018), and are therefore not included here. Social media posts gossiping about the celebrity scene are not discussed here either. Such electronic communication is often characterized by insults and polemical language.

Four Ways of Not Saying Something

Here, I present four main practices of hiding and concealing. Many more could be discerned, but will not be studied here. My examples draw mainly on interactions with Flavie and Ani, two female interlocutors and mutual friends, both in their mid to late thirties at the time of fieldwork. They disclosed various parts of their personal lives and digital interactions to me. Flavie is a divorced mother of three children (and one deceased child) living in her father's house. Her father resides in eastern Congo and visits irregularly, mainly for medical reasons. Ani is married to the father of her three children. Flavie does not have a job (not even in the informal economy); Ani works for a state office. Her salary comes irregularly, and, if she is paid at all, never exceeds US$150.00. Luckily Flavie does not have to pay any rent. Ani's husband brings home some money, although they rely heavily on financial gifts from Ani's mother who receives a modest sum from a rental house in a nearby city.

Both Ani and Flavie were online almost daily, most often on Facebook Messenger through the Facebook Lite and *mode gratuit* platforms; Ani was less frequently on WhatsApp. Both curated their digital worlds carefully, but did so with varying temporalities and with different social intentions. While Flavie published on her Facebook stories and WhatsApp statuses almost daily, Ani hardly did so, except for the occasional birthday greetings, or some memes. Ani mainly commented on others' publications, and preferred communicating in private contexts, such as the WhatsApp messaging facility and Messenger. Flavie spent a lot of time in digital flirting, trying to find a husband in the Congolese diaspora (Pype 2020). She had three smartphones, all different brands, and each with different kinds of damages: one's screen was broken, but she could still read and watch videos; another one's hardware needed to be kept together with an elastic band; and the third one's sound was faulty. Ani had one smartphone and one dumb phone. Usage of multiple phones is to a large extent dictated by the various telephone companies, who make it

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expensive to call beyond one's own network. Having SIM cards of various telephone companies is a smart way of economizing on mobile communication. These young women took full advantage of mobile telephony, which is a crucial tool to organize social and economic life in Kinshasa.[7]

The Not Yet Said

I often encountered Flavie with her fingers on the screen of one of her three smartphones, scrolling through social media platforms, and reading various small conversations she was engaged in. She then would reconsider and think about adding a smiley or sending a picture. These reflections are not present in the sentences or the words or the images that she was writing, but they are as much part of the meanings of the published content. While internally Flavie was often conflicted, curious, uncertain, sometimes even worried about her and her children's future, her doubt and anticipation were rarely shown on screen. Flavie's digital persona usually seemed confident in what she wrote and the pictures she posted.

When Flavie's attention was drawn to one of her smartphones, she often smiled when seeing that one of her *djika*'s (Congolese in the diaspora) had answered *bjr* (digitalk for "hello") on her own *bjr* in Messenger. She then sent short text messages, sometimes adding a photograph of herself. Flavie was in these minimal conversations with a wide range of people, mainly men. Even though not exclusively chatting with men abroad, Flavie clearly favored conversations with men in the diaspora. Like many Kinois girls, she desired to marry out. Global hypergamy is an ideal for many girls in Kinshasa (see Pype 2020). At best there would be a question such as "*oza wapi?*" (where are you?) from the other side, which could be answered by some requests from her side (can you give me some money?; are you going to bring me a gift on your next trip to Kinshasa?, etc.).

Such greetings and small questions are phatically thick: they harbor promises. These conversations confirm that there is a relationship, even if minimally entertained. The quality of that relationship is open, undetermined, pregnant with promises, and with possibilities of fulfillment. The "*oza wapi?*" (where are you?) question[8] lifts the relationship to an intimate dimension, one which Flavie eagerly looks for as it is the kind of question that sexual partners in Kinshasa are allowed, even expected, to ask one another. The subtext of the *oza wapi?* question is the writer's assumption that "you are my wife, and I am allowed to be informed about your whereabouts; I should control and surveil you." So, if a contact moves from *bjr* to *oza wapi*, he suggests that he wants to get in a sexual relationship with Flavie, for whom this question is nothing less than a confirmation of the opening of opportunities.

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Just before responding on the *oza wapi?* question, Flavie has a lot of agency. She knows very well that the allusion of sexual interest at this point is nothing more than an allusion: it can always be denied afterward. Yet, Flavie has a lot of choice: she can decide whether she will tell the contact where she is. If she does so, she thus confirms that the other man is entitled to know and signals to be keen on a sexual relationship with the contact as well;[9] or, as I observed regularly, Flavie can remain silent, and thus communicate that she is not looking to transform the contact into a sexual partner. Usually, as she told me, she did not respond to a person of whom she suspected it to be a friend of one of her family members or of one of her other love interests.

The Almost Said

While the category of "the not yet said" speaks about digital communication and the cultivation of possibilities of new futures (romantic futures in this case), other forms of cryptic digital communication are more concerned with protecting existing relationships. This is the case for "the almost said."

Again this is illustrated in my interactions with Flavie. After a few days of posting nothing at all on her WhatsApp status, due to lack of money to pay for mobile data, Flavie published a series of two, almost identical pictures. Both showed her wearing white jeans shorts, and a deeply cut black top, drawing attention to her breasts. She had put on an Afrowig, with wild, uncontained long black curly hair. A set of red headphones hanging around her neck was the finishing touch of this picture with which she clearly confirmed her status of a *mwasi mabe*, a bad girl (see Pype 2012: 211–14). In Kinois parlance, "a bad girl" designates girls and young women who play with the appearance of cosmopolitanism, emphasize their sexuality, and project themselves as being fashionable. The pictures were taken from a bird's eye view—clearly photographed by someone else. The background was astonishingly sober. Although unclear to the unfamiliar spectator, she was standing in her bathroom, which only contains a concrete floor and a drain in the left corner.

On both pictures, Flavie was clearly suppressing a smile. The first picture showed her posing, both hands on the hips, and looking straight into the camera. The second one contained her in a slightly different pose: she was pointing her index finger of her left hand toward the camera. This gesture is significant, as in Kinshasa it can be a socially dangerous act. Pointing a finger at someone is harmless when an intimate senior person does so to his or her junior (child/wife). In all other contexts, this gesture is interpreted as a major insult and often

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provokes physical fights. In this WhatsApp status, Flavie was speaking to an unidentified addressee. A caption below the second picture gave some more information: *attention* (in French, be careful), confirming the provocative nature of the gesture.

I regularly observe similar status updates with written messages or proverbs or sometimes just saying *yo oyebi* (you [to whom this is addressed] know). These kinds of posts, which I call *sala keba* (be careful) publications, are warnings with much ellipsis. The origin, reason, or content of the warning, as well as the addressee are obscured. Nevertheless, *sala keba* texts just like the text with which I opened this chapter are utterly dialogic. Only those who are in the know might understand. Flavie showed a mastery of the codes of respect and protection. Here, the ellipsis of the addressee was a measure of protection because directly addressing and attacking a person, naming the person by name is socially and spiritually risky. Flavie thus averted the risk of becoming the object of revenge or jealousy and becoming embroiled in *kindoki,* sorcerous attacks or witchcraft accusations.

The Not Said/Not to Say

A third category, the "not said/not to say," speaks to practices of self-censorship. I illustrate this with material from Ani, who was scrolling on her smartphone through her husband's Facebook account when I visited her one day in mid-August 2019. A few days earlier, when she had come by my house, she had complained that she felt isolated. Her husband was constantly out of the house, and she felt lonely. Quickly our conversation had turned to the domestic politics of social media. She was worried about her husband's social media behavior.

About a year before, Ani's husband had changed his Facebook password. This had raised suspicion, mainly because it was a breach in their agreement. As so many young married couples do in Kinshasa, they too had promised one another full transparency in their encounters—also online—with others. Ani could not really say or do anything for him to share the new password. She furthermore had noticed that he was posting various photographs about his work trips to Kongo Central and Mbandaka, two areas in the interior of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). These pictures showed him, an engineer, with some colleagues on various construction sites. Ani found it suspicious that in the previous months he suddenly was more active on his Facebook wall. While before, he posted pictures on their children's birthdays, now she saw that he was informing Facebook contacts about his travels. She did not approve of this though made sure nobody could read her

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dissatisfaction online. Her digital comments on these pictures flattered her husband. She emphasized how strong and beautiful he looked, and applauded the fact that he was seeing parts of the country she had never been able to go to. Yet, at home, offline, Ani insisted he take these pictures offline (which he did not do), because he was—as she said—"exposing his life."

Flavie agreed with Ani's concerns, and in a private conversation reminded me how important it is to *kobomba ndako na yo*, to "hide your house," meaning not to disclose domestic problems or successes.[10] Hiding and revealing are productive practices in public identities whether they are online or offline. These concerns were aptly described in a textual meme Pitshou posted on his WhatsApp status a few months later (31 May 2019, my translation):[11]

> living hidden means living happily
> Publicness attracts desire
> Desire creates jealousy
> Jealousy facilitates the enemy (smiley)

This reasoning reaffirms how one should not expose too much of one's life because the more one reveals, the more ammunition one gives for jealousy, and one risks attracting others, who might interfere in one's marriage or one's (professional or social) success.[12]

The Too Loudly Said

The final category refers to sentences such as *batika yo* (may they let you alone) or *odondwa* (you are leading/ruling), which despite their shortness, hide much social work. Very often, one sees these phrases as comments on messages and photographs that depict one's success, one's beautiful body, one's trip to another country, one's celebration of a wedding or of a new job. Such phrases are also expressed when thanking a person for a service or gift (without explicitly mentioning the service or the gift). This fourth category, "the too loudly said," is part of flattery. It is as if applause needs to divert attention away from the substance of the celebration.

The *batika yo* utterance speaks to reputation production and social relatedness insofar as it suggests that the content of the image (which the *batika yo* text accompanies) may incur jealousy and could incite spiritual attacks, vulgar critique, and assault on one's reputation. *Odondwa* serves fundamentally as flattery as well. Via the *odondwa* idiom, commenters suggest that the depicted individuals are extremely successful

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and powerful, and the commenters subordinate themselves in relation to the person in the post. At the same time, the commenters publicly accept this success and thus protect themselves against possible future *kindoki* (witchcraft and sorcery) accusations.

On the Importance of Allusive Language

The previous snapshot of four types of communicative strategies online shows how *toile* (the internet; also the canvas, see below) of social media is a space in which Kinois play with the boundaries between the hidden and the said/shown and thus impact their futures. I discerned two pragmatics that underlie the posts: (a) trying to protect oneself and/or the person depicted in the images (see Ani's feedback on her husband, but also *batika yo* and *sala keba* genres); and (b) trying to provoke someone (as Flavie did with her picture in which she pointed her finger). These messages are very much embedded in a search for urban conviviality. After all, posting elliptic messages on one's digital status is an attempt to arrive at a solution, either for oneself, or for someone with whom one is close, or to maintain a harmonious relationship with the depicted person.

I could have used more standard linguistic nouns to indicate the four forms of speech: ellipsis, allusion, self-censorship, and flattery. I instead want to make an explicit connection with the poetics of divination. My approach to the unsaid and the hidden is very much inspired by Richard Werbner's study of language politics and linguistic texture of divination interactions. In *Divination's Grasp* (2015), Werbner provides us a thoughtful and culturally sensitive understanding of highly allusive and suggestive communication in divinatory interactions. In these sessions, as Werbner (2015: 3) describes, enigmatic words serve reflection, "even as they arouse emotions." The suggestivity of divinatory discourse, another manifestation of "the almost said," is necessary because of an inadequacy of language to get at the occult, at the real.

There is a significant analogy in the suggestivity of divinatory discourse and with that of Kinois digispeak in the WhatsApp status updates and other digital spaces. The practice of circumventing "the real" by "almost saying," either by not mentioning the addressee, by silencing certain truths, or by using metaphorical language, is prevalent in Kinois' discourses on the *toile* where personal relationships find expression. Pitshou's ultimate goal is, just like in the cryptic divinatory poetics described by Werbner, to push for reflection, not to raise anger, and even to protect others (spirits or social others).[13]

Divinatory practices show that "the world around you is divided, some share truly with you, others secretly spit behind your back and greedily

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heap your fruits for themselves, not for you. Remember who to eat and share with, and who not to trust" (Werbner 2015: 3). Similar advice or wisdom is shared on social media platforms: a warning that the world is full of antagonism and conflict, but that is how the world goes. There is a social- and future-oriented approach toward concealment in the digital world. Furthermore, suggestive language also speaks to incompleteness, to enhancing possibilities, openness, and opportunity, as "almost said" posts do.

Shadow Conversations

Digital hermeneutics of elliptic electronic communications as described in the previous part of this chapter requires far more information than digital content shows. Even if emojis, icons, images and captions are used, these publications are fragments, snapshots of moments in a person's unfolding social life. Kinois know very well that digital conversations are always partial. In order to get a better grasp of the unsaid on Kinshasa's *toile*, I propose we study "shadow conversations."[14] I want to illustrate this with a longer ethnographic elaboration of digital communication by Flavie during one of the rare occasions on which Flavie showed herself in distress and anger on her WhatsApp statuses. The material will show that people like Flavie carefully curate their digital person, even if it appears in the fleeting space of status updates and stories. After all, these online spaces are very much public spaces where people meet with friends and joking partners but also with those they are in a hierarchical or even rivalrous relationship with.

Flavie and Samourai

From mid-April 2020, Flavie had been posting WhatsApp statuses showing despair and asking for God's help. Even though emotions were expressed loudly and clearly, the context was nebulous. In WhatsApp phone calls, Flavie gave me more information: her youngest daughter could not walk anymore, hardly spoke, and was losing weight by the day. Flavie urgently needed money to visit doctors, get X-rays done, and buy the medicine the doctors were going to prescribe. During that period, Flavie was in a difficult romantic relationship with Samourai, a Kinois man in his early thirties and a few years younger than she was. It was full COVID-19 time, and a few weeks after the distressing digital posts, Flavie's daughter was diagnosed with tuberculosis, and urgently needed US$400.00 to pay for the doctor's bills and the required medicine. Via

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phone calls, SMS messaging, and online texts, Flavie had contacted almost everybody that she thought she could reach out to for financial assistance and was carefully monitoring who responded and who did not. To her dissatisfaction, Samourai told her he was short of money and could not help Flavie. In the ensuing days, he never called to inquire about Flavie's daughter. "Radio silence," so Flavie told me with a mixture of anger, regret, and astonishment.

On 30 April, Flavie posted on her WhatsApp status a sequence of mixed media: the first part contained the words *bonne chance* (good luck), written in French in white font against a sky-blue background. A heart emoji was placed underneath the text. After a few seconds, the WhatsApp status moved to two short clips of the Congolese duet *tshobo*, sung by the Congolese rumba musicians Fally Ipupa and MJ 30. Flavie had selected two excerpts of the song and cut these sequences with an app on her mobile phone. She then uploaded these on her WhatsApp status and added the caption "and this will be the last (time). Your girlfriend!" (*et ça sera la dernière. Tshobo na yo!*) twice, as if to put emphasis on the message. The sequences were carefully chosen: they contained some phrases in which the singers lament their lover's silence. Addressing their lovers, they cry out "I had promised myself I would never let me be hurt again. I would never cry over someone else. But I cannot help myself. I guess it is love."

Fast forward to mid-May. Samourai, who had seen Flavie's WhatsApp status updates, indeed had understood that Flavie's laments, mediated by the song, were inspired by hardship that she endured because of his attitude. He did not react on her posts online but phoned her, and they began talking again. However, their relationship did not really improve or not as quickly enough as Flavie would have liked. So, mid-May, Flavie happily accepted the invitation of an admirer, who proposed a photoshoot at Kinsuka, one of the photogenic places in town, where young (aspiring) couples stroll and engage in romantic flirtation. The week before their date, the suitor paid for a trip to the hair saloon, where she got new hair extensions. This is a common practice among aspiring and actual lovers: the man pays for beauty treatments (hair, nails, skin, clothes, etc.) for his girlfriend. That Sunday, Flavie took a few sets of clothes along to Kinsuka, where they spent the afternoon flirting, eating fish, and taking photographs. On Monday morning, Flavie posted ten pictures on her WhatsApp status and on her Facebook wall. They all elicited flattering comments.

Flavie's social media publications are excellent examples of the double meanings online postings may have. She was confirming her outer person as a beautiful, joyful, and fashionable young girl, wearing long

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white, braided hair extensions which almost reached her buttocks; the blue suede shoes perfectly matched the fashionable yellow-blue blouse of the popular *ya mado* series. In some other photographs, she was wearing a black and white summer dress. Her poses were well-thought out: in some she was squatting; in others she was lightly turning away thus drawing attention to her behind; in other pictures she was playfully draping herself around picket fences of the old fishing village; and in a few of these photographs, she was just standing upright, confidently gazing into the lens. The pictures had a semi-professional glow; the photographer clearly knew how to use the natural light.

While the photographer would usually ask US$20.00 for these pictures; Flavie did not have to pay. Yet, while the photographer was using his camera to capture Flavie, she was thinking of Samourai. And, on Monday afternoon, she told me in a voice message that she had deliberately posted these pictures on her WhatsApp profiles and Facebook walls to get Samourai jealous. "I want to show him that I am happy without him; I want to make him jealous. He will see my posts, and by tonight he will have called me with a series of questions: who took these pictures? When did that happen? How do you know the photographer? Who paid for the shoot? etc. etc."[15]

On the surface, these photographs may just be an expression of Flavie as a young, mobile woman; yet underneath these pictures lay emotions of play (with the photographer) and provocation (toward Samourai). Any of her Facebook and WhatsApp contacts commenting on how *canon* (killing) she looked, were feeding Samourai's jealousy, so Flavie assumed. "Oh yes, he will watch my status; he always does. And if for one reason or the other he cannot, I am sure his friends will show the pictures and the comments to him," Flavie argued confidently. For Flavie, the comments made by her Facebook contacts were amplifying the provocation and play that were inscribed yet hidden in the digital publications. Ultimately, Flavie did not expect Samourai to comment or respond online at all nor did she want that. She had other expectations: she wanted him to take action, that is, to re-start their conversation and come to a solution.

The above description contextualizes a series of digitally published expressions. I have situated these publications in a set of discourse histories. The telephone conversations that preceded Flavie's posts, as well as the interactions that she was aspiring too, are all part of "shadow conversations" without which the meanings of the "good luck" post, the music clips, and the uploaded photographs are difficult to grasp.

I am inspired by Irvine's notion of "shadow conversations" coined in her analysis of the Senegalese Xarxaar insult genre (Irvine 1996). In

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Xarxaar, insults are told during rituals, such as weddings, and very often voiced by socially appropriate intermediaries, such as griots. Insults are composed in the days preceding the wedding while women gather to prepare food, clothes, and other stuff. During these activities, gossip, inside information, excitement, frustration, and other emotions are shared. The conversations of the preceding days, feeding insults expressed in the ritual moment of the wedding party, are what Irvine calls "shadow conversations." These are moments of social interaction to which the larger public of the wedding does not have access. I argue that similar conversations are going on in social media updates and other posts. A wide range of "other" (not always electronically mediated) discussions and interactions form the background of digital posts, and inspire the publication of other posts. Even when invisible online, these are very much part of chains of discourse and social action that one can observe online.

The proposed method of reconstructing shadow conversations of the digital sphere is complementary to Jennifer Deger's (2016) study of "thick photography." In an inspiring article on "digital labor" that Yolngu interlocutors carry out on digital photographs, for example, inserting flickering animation, writing captions, adding filters, and more. Deger draws attention to practices of intense bodily engagement with screens of smartphones and with the digitally represented. Practices of handling devices and working on digital content are full of meaning, affect, and purpose.

In my focus on "shadow conversations," I am not undermining the spectral labor that people like Flavie carry out on their status updates and social media platforms: after all, people curate a large body of texts, various kinds of images included, in their phone and tablet galleries and on social media platforms; social media users need to choose wisely from their digital archive; and select aptly the image or the part of a song that speaks most to their situation. Yet, the notion of "shadow conversations" is mainly oriented on the discursive for three reasons. First, it tries to capture various "discourse histories" that came before and after the status updates and other online communication. Second, many status updates, memes, and digital texts of Kinois contain a strong discursive component: they are composed of proverbs, lyrics, slogans, congratulations, and warnings. Finally, as Flavie reminded me: the goal of her WhatsApp statuses is to start the conversation, so that dialogue can begin and a solution can be found. These "shadow conversations" thus are part of the "thickness" of the status updates; through and by attending to shadow conversations, we are able to understand how digital content is woven into the social fabric; how online media gain social significance and performativity; and how social media users like Flavie

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work toward new futures. What is shown on the *toile* (digital screen) are snapshots, almost like bullets, targeted at someone, yet it requires a skilled eye to understand who the target is and why. The ethnographer thus has the same task as the hermeneutical practices Kinois digital contacts engage in: they all know that there are many implicit dialogues at play, and like the participants in the Xarxaar wedding festivities, they all "projectively construct," these "as part of the pragmatic reasoning by which they interpret an utterance and understand its significance" (Irvine 1996: 140).

Digital Persona

The metaphor of "shadow conversations" in the description of a method to study digital content anthropologically, gains a deeper meaning in Congolese ethnography, because of its connection with west Congolese notions of personhood in which "the shadow" references a "vulnerable self" (Jacobson-Widding 1990: 31). Here, we arrive at a second interpretation of the "shadow" in the "shadow conversations": Flavie was exposing her vulnerability on WhatsApp status updates.

During fieldwork in the 1980s in western Congo, Swedish anthropologist Anita Jacobson-Widding observed a "clear-cut opposition between an 'inner man' and an individual 'outer man,' yet emotional experiences of selfhood are expressed in ambiguous metaphors, which are not appropriate topics for public discourse" (Jacobson-Widding 1990: 31). Two elements of this quotation are relevant to think about how Kinois manage digital persons and interactions: first: there is a difference between an "inner man" and an "outer man." The outer man is the moral person; while the inner person refers to the emotional and interactional experience of personhood, in particular in connection with individual agency (1990: 34). Second, emotions were not suited for public conversations. To make sense of this distribution of the outer and inner person over different forms of discursive interaction, Jacobson-Widding drew on Paul Ricoeur's distinction between "text," expressed by the moral person, and "talk," where the self finds expression. Whereas the former contains a kind of fixity and can appeal to a certain universality; "talk" is fleeting, it is difficult to fixate the meaning, and has a more informal character.

The idea of protecting the inner person, that is, one's emotional life, resonates strongly when we look into the semantic field of the "shadow." A Lingala dictionary translates the "shadow" as *elili*, which can mean (1) (animated or non-animated) image, photograph, shadow, portrait, symbol; or (2) invisible material body, in contrast to the visible material

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body (*nzoto*).[16] Portraits and shadows are related to one's invisible material body. The latter, one's soul, contains vitality, fertility, strength, success, and health. This invisible body dwells in the invisible space. Protecting that invisible body happens first and foremost by protecting shadows, photographs, and one's emotional life. The relevance of this distinction between one's visible and invisible person can be illustrated with a fieldwork anecdote from one of my earlier research projects in Kinshasa. When I was studying media engagements of elderly Kinois, one of my interlocutors showed me with much reluctance an X-ray picture of his thorax. His younger wife, who trusted me, wanted me to have evidence of his affliction. Only after a few visits, when his wife started talking about the X-ray again, he took it out of the cabinet, while telling me that I was the first person (besides his wife and doctor) who saw this. He was afraid of sorcerers (*bandoki*), who could take advantage of the information that the X-ray contained: the X-ray showed his weak spot, and others could use his illness to kill him spiritually.

The anecdote may help us to think about the risk of visibility in the digital world. Very much like the meeting in the living room, social media platforms are spaces in which Kinois calibrate inner and outer aspects of their lives. As they are careful not to give easy access to their "inner person," or their shadow, or the X-ray, people will act similarly online.

Probably not surprisingly then, Jacobson-Widding noted how people would be "fairly secretive about their notions of the shadow" (1990: 40), because it had a highly sensitive nature. Informal discourse in intimate circumstances was the only way Jacobson-Widding's interlocutors talked about their shadow, photographs, and personal names (1990: 40). These had to be cherished and protected, so Jacobson-Widding learned (1990: 46). People lowered their voices, searched for words, sometimes showed signs of embarrassment or got excited and expressed personal fears and glanced around to see if anyone was listening. There was an "air of secrecy" around people's conversations about their inner person. This secrecy, so Jacobson-Widding infers, was the outcome of fears of loss of vitality and health, loss of control over oneself, and loss of one's power of initiative, potency, and agency. She added that "[c]ertain aspects of personhood may be omitted if the interlocutors have a hierarchical relationship, or if the interview situation has a formal or public character. The missing information may be delivered in a quite different kind of social context" (1990: 33).

Taking cues from Jacobson-Widding's ethnography, we can argue that various platforms on social media provide room for "different kinds of social contexts" and allow for new shadows to be cast. First of all,

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different apps and different technical possibilities of these apps allow for a further differentiation between the "inner" and the "outer" person and between one's emotions and one's public persona. Flavie chose to show her despair on the WhatsApp status, not on her Facebook wall. And she conversed about it with me, in private conversations, online and offline, not on public social media fora. Second, the digital allows for new platforms on which one's visible, yet immaterial, self circulates and is exposed to other's opinions, intentions, and projects.

Shadow conversations allow us entry into the realm of the inner person, that subjectivity full of vitality, health, initiative, agency, and potency. The distinction between an "outer" and "inner man" does not only pertain to digital and their shadow conversations, as I elaborated upon above. It also draws our attention to the fleeting character of the WhatsApp status updates, and Facebook stories in which the above conversations are published. None of these digital spaces have a permanent character, in contrast to Facebook walls or WhatsApp and Messenger conversations. Rather, stories and status updates only last for a maximum of twenty-four hours. It is no coincidence that Flavie and Pitshou choose these social media platforms, fleeting by design, to publish their advice, warnings, and laments. The impermanence of these spaces of the social media platforms communicates to the contacts that these messages have an intimate relevance, and should be read as such. Social media thus allow people to express elusivity and fragility through shadow conversations as in and around the WhatsApp status updates, the Facebook stories, and Instagram stories. The fleeting, temporal character of these online spaces fits the intimacy of emotions, fears, uncertainties, and desires.

Such reflections on the distribution about personal information over various social media channels is in character with various challenges I experienced when carrying out research on personal social media worlds in Kinshasa. Usually, people shy away from giving much information about ongoing hardship. I often had to wait sometimes until a crisis had ended before getting information. I have become familiar with vague answers, and unanswered questions about contextual information regarding certain memes and photographs posted on social media platforms. So, very often, when I see a *sala keba* post, and I ask for more information, I am told that these are just general comments. Or, I get responses such as: "I liked the proverb; it contains a lot of wisdom"; "This is my favorite part of the song"; or "I was just fooling around on the net." In such instances, I do not press, even though third parties might have already given me background information, helping me to reconstruct the context or parts of it. The refusal to give

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further information is significant, as it shows that most posters actually do not want the majority of the receivers to recontextualize the message. These refusals are part of the *kipe ya yo* sociality, (mind your own business) (see Pype 2016b: 243–44). Very often, weeks or even months afterward, I get updates and background information, usually after the conflict or crisis has been resolved. This conscious playing with disclosure and concealment and the temporalization of these practices of publication and explanation are common strategies, fully embedded in Kinois' management of their inner person and social life.

Online Pragmatics—"Pulling the Images"

Elsewhere, I described how Flavie used magical powders before making digital phone calls with (potential) lovers (Pype 2020). These phone calls were full of promise, sweetness, and erotic longing, while also expressing hardship, suffering, and lack. Flavie played with these men's feelings, trying to get attention, money, or material gain. Of course, she could not phrase her intentions directly: she had to mask these, cover these up in flattery and seduction. Therefore, Flavie often sent *des photos sexy* (seductive images). Her addressees, of course, knew that Flavie was playing, as much as they were playing themselves.[17] Both parties engaged in seductive appearances, *impressionisme* or *aspè* as it is called in Kinshasa, though they all knew that the surface hides uncomfortable truths such as the other's unavailability or need for financial assistance. Yet, sometimes it is better to ignore these worlds beneath the (screen) surface.

In Kinois parlance, the skills of reading into people's words, gestures, or actions are not unique for digital interaction. Part of quotidian urban smartness is the skill to *benda bilili* (to pull the images). The major assumption is that reality is not what one is seeing, but rather what is hidden. To *benda bilili* means to understand that the visible is very much a smoke screen and that one needs to be able to see through and beyond it. The visible is literally blurring and misguiding vision. There is an epistemological dimension to this. It is commonly accepted in Kinshasa that one can never fully know what is real nor what is in other people's hearts and minds (Pype 2015); people deliberately play with appearances and suggestion.[18] All of this entails that people perceive of the "canvas," the digital screen, as merely another screen that blurs and obscures "the real." With the *benda bilili* trope, the "shadow" gains a third meaning here: the "shadow" references the invisible, very often, although not limited to spiritual, invisible worlds.

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So, even if posts in the social media platforms display a deliberate aesthetics of ambiguity, allusion, and disguise, the described management of the undisclosed and the hidden in the digital is not new; the exegesis of digital communication is fully in line with nondigital strategies to find meaning and value in signs, indexes, and symbols.

Marianne Ferme's observations about the cultural order of dissimulation in Sierra Leone perfectly describe Kinois' *benda bilili* dictum: "the visible world (as it appears for instance, in ritual, political, and domestic appropriations of public space) is activated by forces concealed beneath the surface of discourse, objects, and social relations" (2001: 2). All of this entails a disposition of constant alertness toward a potential disruption of the deceptive order of ordinary appearances. "What appears on the surface as a generous action toward friends, family, and strangers, may suddenly change into a violent encounter with the enemy," so Ferme (2001: 2) wrote about life in Sierra Leone where histories of slavery and war destabilized social life. In such a precarious social universe, friends may turn into enemies in cases where someone is accused of *kindoki* (witchcraft and sorcery). Relations are unstable, and people are constantly searching for signs to understand how others are positioned toward themselves. In Kinshasa, a context of postcolonial violence enacted by the former Mobutu regime (1966–1997), civil war (1996–1997), and more than three decades of economic crisis, have rendered social relations very fragile. Therefore, Kinois advise each other and outsiders, like myself, to distrust others, as "we do not know what is in people's hearts" (*toyebi motema ya batu te*).[19]

While Ferme illustrated this necessity of protecting one's private and emotional life with various kinds of (material and immaterial) masks, this comparison can be extended for the digital world: the online world is a similar representational space where digital alter egos serve as masks; the digital screen becomes one additional surface that conceals, and through which people can be fooled, but also can protect the inner person.

It is thus unsurprising that Kinois hermeneutics of digital posts have a very pragmatic orientation: one tries to reconstruct intentions and emotions. The digital depth does not necessarily orient toward an epistemological, cosmological world full of spirits. Rather, the shadow conversations and the hidden world of the online *toile* are very much of "this world," embedded in material affairs and personal projects.

These observations help us to further our reflections on the ontology of the virtual world (Mbembe 2016; Newell and Pype 2021). In the study of social media communication, it is most probably no coincidence that

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Kinois speak about *la toile* not as a spider web (which would be the most conventional translation in this context), but as a canvas, a screen. The *toile* provides a platform for metonymic relations. When understanding the *toile* as a canvas, a (conscious or unconscious) link is made with paintings. Paintings present individual presentations or emplacements of the visual world. This positioning is the outcome of agency and intentionality. A similar make-up or composition happens with online posts. Digital aesthetics draw on concealment (as Flavie did not show or mention the day out with the flirtatious photographer) and on make-up (Flavie literally prepared her day out by spending time in the hair salon and selecting various outfits). The *toile* is thus not necessarily an access point into a hidden, ontological space, but it is first and foremost materially and aesthetically connected to the experiential world. The internet, social media included, provides an artificial, purposeful space that performs new realities in close relationship to the lived material world.

The connection with paintings seems even more fruitful for my focus on "shadow conversations" when considering the social relevance of popular paintings of Congolese colonial and early postcolonial times. Popular paintings were, just like the cryptic digital posts now are, fully embedded in a chain of discursive practices. Both Johannes Fabian (1998: 52) and Bogumil Jewsiewicki (2003) argued that the social purpose of Congolese popular paintings was not so much aesthetic pleasure, but rather pragmatically establishing a discursive realm in which colonial and postcolonial traumas could be expressed. The paintings served as conversation openers. The popular paintings and digital posts thus share the goal of opening up a discursive sphere. As mentioned above, Flavie hoped that Samourai would start talking to her again. The visual (and its specific arrangements of themes and protagonists) on paintings and on the digital canvas serves equally to facilitate conversations, spark debate, and trigger responses.

On the Necessity of Reconstructing Shadow Conversations

Given that online communication is very much embedded in a pragmatics of everyday life, especially the management of social relationships, and that encoding and decoding are practices familiar to many, the main argument of this chapter was that, if we want to grasp the social bearings of online communication such as WhatsApp status updates, Facebook stories, and Instagram publications, we need to acknowledge and analyze the online exegesis and hermeneutics along

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local communicative practices. The material about the four ways of not saying something shows how as ethnographers, we need to combine online and offline research. Only then can we fully grasp that cryptic digital communication in Kinshasa is purposive, embedded in relationships, and speaks to vulnerability, emotions, and more importantly, to personal (aspired) futures.

Following points can be made regarding cryptopolitics online based on the ethnography. First, in contrast to *palabre*, the speech genre that aims at resolving conflict, digital status updates and stories are never conflict resolving in themselves. Moreover, they *should* not be the endpoint. Just like Flavie's texts messages to Samourai were supposed not to be the final utterance. They are embedded in a chain of discourses: they have discourse histories. The interpretative labor that the "talk" of WhatsApp status updates, memes, and digital story telling seem to beg for requires social skill. One needs to know if and how to react. Appropriate forms of reacting are consoling and giving advice. If one does not feel concerned, the best way of reacting is telling the WhatsApp contact "to pray to God," "to stay determined," or some random advice about not trusting others.

Second, the chapter has brought together two types of "shadow conversations." The first type of shadow conversations are those conversations in the background of digital media posts: those that lead up to a post and those that are expected to be generated by reactions on a post. The second type of shadow conversations relates to the particular status of the fleeting WhatsApp statuses, Facebook stories, and other more temporal, public posts. In these online temporary frames, Kinois social media users dare to express vulnerability or dare to enter into more provocative language. These relate to people's "shadows," their inner person, which are usually not expressed in public talk.

Third, this double status of "shadow conversations" points to methodological issues. It draws attention to users' navigations of social media and their deliberations about affordances of particular platforms and technical modalities. Kinois users fragment emotions, subjectivities, and aspirations, break these up and distribute them over different platforms and modalities. It is to these varying ways of "distributing the digital person" that we need to be attentive. Social media are literally plural and polymorphic; very much like identities and subjectivities are emerging, varied, and multiple. Users deploy various possibilities of the digital skillfully, while they simultaneously dialogue with offline social expectations and codes. We need to study these multifarious interactions.

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Fourth, the digital publications under scrutiny here reveal something about Kinois sociality and the positionality of the individual therein. Ultimately, reconstructed shadow histories teach us that social relationships in Kinshasa are unstable, delicate, and fragile. People constantly try to protect their personhood by trying to figure out who their allies are, on whom they can and cannot rely. By managing their digital persona, they are caring for their "shadow", ànd their connectivity to social others.

Finally, while Irvine was more concerned with the sender's role (addressee, sponsor, ghost writer, and so on), here I was more concerned with the receiver's role. The receiver of many social media posts is plural: some are "addressees," while others are not, yet they are also receivers. A text or utterance can be made in the public domain (such as a WhatsApp status update) but is only meaningful to an individual or a small group of people.[20] Nevertheless, as the ethnography has shown, the presence of this receiver-who-is-not-the-addressee is socially significant for the social media user: on the one hand, posting cryptic messages can be a way of soliciting help (you never know who will come up with a solution); on the other hand, it can also be a way of warding other people off—"I have too many problems now, don't bother me with something else"—and at the same time it can also be intended to show people "I'm strong, even in moments of hardship, I am resilient." One finds here striking parallels with other research on the aesthetics of popular culture in sub-Saharan Africa. Karin Barber (2007) noted how the audience is treated as internally differentiated, with its own foci or centers of attention, which performers acknowledge and address. In the WhatsApp *sala keba* texts, the same is going on: images and texts are deeply meaningful to certain people, those who feel addressed, but only contain superficial meaning to other (WhatsApp) contacts.

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Notes

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1. Facebook *mode gratuit* came with smartphones and SIM cards purchased with Congolese telecom, through which users could have minimal access to Facebook without consuming any mobile data. It was suspended in late May 2022. Facebook Lite is a similar app, with some more functions (though no gifs, polls, or live functions), but which consumed some mobile data. Since August 2020, the app is not available in the Play store or on IOS anymore, and thus is not updated but remains functional. Both were part of Facebook's "Free Basics" initiative, which started in 2016. Both were very popular in Kinshasa during fieldwork.
2. All names in this chapter are pseudonyms.
3. Informal polygamy and polyandry are common in Kinshasa. For girls, this phenomenon is called *chic-choc-chèque*, indicating the various "services" that the lovers cater to (cloths, sex, money). Girls should not inform the men about their rivals, otherwise they risk losing that connection. See Pype (2012: 232–90) for a discussion of how Christian churches advocate against urban informal polygamy and polyandry in Kinshasa.
4. (Classificatory) sons and fathers keep details of their friendships, their romantic lives and even much of their economic activities hidden from one another. Friends from the same gender, on the other hand, usually are well-informed about each other's intimate lifeworlds, because these are often literally involved, going from having a hand in the establishing of a romantic relationship through mediating quarrels and disputes and taking revenge on behalf of the friend after a romantic relationship has ended badly for the friend. Friends also protect each other's public reputation, especially because speaking about someone as being affected by another's actions risks weakening the reputation of a "strong man" (*moto makasi*), a masculine ideal in Kinshasa (Pype 2007).
5. With "digital Kinois," I indicate people who identify as "Kinois", by writing in Lingala or KiKinois, and dialoguing with others about Kinois life, in the digital sphere, even though they may be residing elsewhere in DRC or abroad.
6. See Aubrey Graham (2019) for a detailed discussion of how media ideologies may contradict one another when an image is interpreted by audiences familiar with other media ideologies. The image in this case is a digital photograph of rebel violence in eastern Congo posted by a German journalist on her Twitter account, which went viral (2019: 267).
7. See Pype (2021) about the importance of mobile phones and social media in the lifeworlds of Kinshasa's inhabitants; and Pype (2017) for a discussion

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of "smartness" in Kinshasa. Tanzanu (2012) describes similar dynamics in Cameroon; Schneidermann (forthcoming) explores "intimate infopolitics" of girls and women in a Capetonian township.

8. There is an accidental overlap with US conventional digispeak "where you at?", which may indicate how inquiring about someone's location serves as a general greeting or a general quizzing about someone's well-being. The Kinois context is different, as the "*oza wapi?*" question is a conversation opener among (aspiring) lovers. In other conversations, it is not polite to ask someone where she or he is as it would mean that the person asking the question assumes a kind of entitlement to know about the other's whereabouts. Kinois sociality is very much concerned with "mind your own business" (*kipe ya yo*, Pype 2016b)—except in the intimate relationship of (aspiring) sexual partners. Though, there is a gendered distribution here: men are expected to ask their female lovers this question, not vice versa.
9. Even if Flavie lies about her exact whereabouts, she confirms to the contact that he is entitled to check in on her.
10. In other contexts, like South Africa, it has been documented that hiding one's private space online is an effective strategy against potential burglary.
11. vivre caché c'est vivre heureux
La publicité attire la convoitise
La convoitise cree la jalousie
La jalousie faconne l'ennemi (smiley).
12. These observations should caution us to read visual representations of lifestyles not always as a reflection of what people actually experience. Furthermore, scholars have shown how photography sometimes stages one as a "desired other" (Beherend 2002), this also occurs on Facebook, e.g., Claudia Böhme's (2019) research among Sudanese refugees' digital self-representations shows how people sometimes stage themselves as living their dream (as a fashion designer, a successful carpenter) as means of prefiguration or active future-making.
13. On divination in the Kinshasa region, see among others Devisch (2012, 2018).
14. Obviously, "Digital Kinshasa" is also a space of trolling and exchanging hate speech. However, these are usually expressed in conversations with unknown digital others, and are often connected to posts about politics, public figures, or global events. In this chapter, I focus on micropolitics of social media communication insofar as the posts relate to people's intimate lives.
15. The photographer remained a friend with whom Flavie had regular encounters, although he understood pretty quickly that their relationship would not transform into a love relationship. From time to time, he helps her financially, as friends do.
16. Newell (2012: 259–60) has observed a similar distinction between the physical outer and spiritual inner body.
17. In Pype (2020), I argue that Flavie was "playful" and thus trying to change her reality, though many of her "digital husbands" were merely "playing".
18. These practices of playing with suggestion and appearance have also been analyzed in other urban African societies. See Newell (2012) on bluffing in Abidjan; Luisa Lombard (2016) on practices of camouflage in the Central African Republic; and Archambault (2017) on the economy of pretense in Inhambane (Mozambique).

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19. See Benjamin Rubbers (2009) for a discussion of this generalized feeling of distrust in the Congolese Katanga region.
20. Similar to the layers of meaning in evangelizing television serials (see Pype 2012: 164). The serials' producers expect that born-again Christians, other Christians, and "pagans" all relate differently to the broadcast images and sounds.

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