

ROMAN CATHOLIC FAITH REPRESENTED IN KEZILAHABI'S *MZINGILE*

SONJA MEZGER

Summary

This study elaborates how Kezilahabi depicts elements of Roman Catholic faith in his book *Mzingile*. Throughout the book religious institutions and the image of God are deconstructed. Nevertheless, Kezilahabi uses images derived from the Bible and Roman Catholic rituals to describe the new world order. This leads to the conclusion that the recognition of the existence of these concepts as concepts opens the way for the creation of a new world. Kezilahabi seems not to be convinced of the Roman Catholic faith being useful in search of the meaning of life. He rather builds upon the creative space, the emptiness left after the deconstruction of religious concepts.

1. Introduction

This study aims at opening a new field of discussion concerning Kezilahabi's works. His last book *Mzingile* can be interpreted as a story about searching for the meaning of life. There might be many possibilities of analysing *Mzingile* as Bertoncini, Wamitila and Gromov have shown. What I am interested in, is how Kezilahabi depicts Christian religion – or more precisely Roman Catholic faith. Due to his educational background he has profound knowledge and experiences with Catholicism while being an expert in other philosophical theories. Therefore, one can expect him to discuss elements of this faith and critically examine them. Within this context it is also worth knowing whether Kezilahabi takes Roman Catholic faith to be useful in search of the meaning of life.¹

Locating *Mzingile* (1991) within the works of Kezilahabi one can picture it as the sequel of *Nagona*, published in 1990. Most scholars analyse these two books together as one according to their close relation. Even though it might be difficult to deal with *Mzingile* only being merely the second half, I still think it's worthwhile and want to give it a try.

Mzingile – the labyrinth – is living up to its name. Kezilahabi does not only give account of a meandering travel, but he structures his opus according to this theme. In almost every chapter he changes the narrative perspective and leaves it to his audience to find out which particular point of time within the chronology of the story he describes. Only slight hints are provided to illuminate the meaning of it all and to lead the readers through the labyrinth.

¹ I am very grateful to Mr. Ridder Samsom for his valuable comments and suggestions on the topic and for encouraging me to write this paper and to present it at the 16th Swahili Colloquium in Bayreuth.

Classifying this book in terms of literary genre similarly poses some problems. Gromov concludes quite comprehensible that one cannot put *Mzingile* straight into one literary genre but one must admit that *Mzingile* includes folktale, parable, science-fiction and realistic plan (Gromov 1998: 74-76). While Bertoncini is said to have called this book "a postmodern novel", Gromov would not agree with the term "novel", but he definitely agrees with the term "postmodern"(ibidem: 78).

In a wider perspective Wamitila considers *Mzingile* to be one of Kezilahabi's metaphysics in comparison with earlier books. In this context the term metaphysics is defined as "dealing with something beyond the physical world, something yonder" (Wamitila 1991: 62). Beyond the physical world Kezilahabi takes the philosophical way to depict the search for the meaning of life. But still he needs and uses the pictures of the physical world to explain the philosophical view.

This paper will first provide the necessary background consisting in biographical information on the author and in a short summary of *Mzingile*. In the main part I will examine which elements of Roman Catholic faith are described and how they are presented. This part will be divided into two corresponding to the book's distinction into the old world and the new one. The results will be discussed in the final conclusion.

2. Kezilahabi

Euphrase Kezilahabi was born in 1944 on the island of Ukerewe in Lake Victoria (Tanzania). He first went to the village primary school and later changed to Nyegezi Junior (Catholic) Seminary where future priests received their education. But he left after completing form VI of his secondary education and joined the University of Dar es Salaam in 1967 (Bertoncini 1989: 107). During his studies he was engaged in different philosophical theories such as Aristoteles, Plato, Jung, Marx and Nietzsche (Wamitila 1991: 64f.). He wrote his M.A. thesis in 1976 about Shaaban Robert's novels. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison he received a second M.A. degree in 1982. With his dissertation entitled *African philosophy and the problem of literature interpretation* he was awarded his Ph.D. degree in 1985 (Bertoncini 1989: 107; 141). After lecturing Swahili literature at the University of Dar es Salaam for a long time, he accepted the call to the University of Botswana where he's presently teaching African languages and literature². Kezilahabi published numerous novels³, two collections of poems and one theatre play. In 1990 he received the Italian *Edoardo Sanguinetti Memorial Prize* and in 1995 the *Shaaban Robert Memorial Prize*⁴. Still, Kezilahabi is not only a writer and a lecturer, but also a scholar and research worker. Beside his different papers to achieve

² <http://www.epm.net.co/VIIfestivalpoesia/html/Memoria10/kezilahabi.html> (23.09.2002, 14:32 h).

³ *Rosa Mistika* (1971); *Kichwamaji* (1974); *Dunia Uwanja wa Fujo* (1975); *Gamba la Nyoka* (1976); *Nagona* (1990); *Mzingile* (1991)

⁴ Cf. website footnote 2

academic titles he published a book on Shaaban Robert's poetry⁵ and several studies and articles on Swahili literature.

3. *Mzingile*

Mzingile – the labyrinth– tells the story of the meandering travel of a hero without name. He is simply called *Mimi* (I). He is sent to bear the message of the Second Saviour's (*Mkombozi wa pili*) death to her father *Mzee* and to take him to her funeral. While looking for *Mzee* the journey takes more and more the form of a search for the meaning of life. *Mimi* finds *Mzee* on the top of a mountain in his hut and has several conversations with him. But *Mimi* leaves the house without convincing *Mzee* to join him. The journey back home turns again into a search for answers to questions which are not really asked. Returning to his village *Mimi* realizes that meanwhile several centuries have passed by and the world is facing abyss after a nuclear catastrophe. In the ruins of his house *Mimi* meets surprisingly *Mzee* and their talks continue. *Mimi* attends closely on the old man, but gets tired of him, too. Anyway, he cannot leave *Mzee* on his own. After some time rains are starting to fall and the poor nature recovers slowly. During this time a magic woman (*Mwanamke*) appears, picks up *Mimi* and guides him to a kind of paradise. *Mzee* stays behind and finally disappears. *Mimi* and *Mwanamke* seem to become the couple to start the world anew. They seem to know about the mistakes made in the past. To avoid such mistakes in the future they start to rebuild the new world without using the already existing knowledge.

4. Roman Catholic faith in *Mzingile*

Like other religions, Roman Catholic faith⁶ includes several elements such as the institutions, the belief, rituals and dogmas. I have chosen to concentrate on the institutions and the belief. In explaining these two aspects, rituals will be mentioned as well, but not treated separately. Furthermore, there is a need for distinction between the old world which is about to disappear and the new world which is about to begin in *Mzingile*. Therefore, I will structure my analysis likewise into an old world and a new world.

4.1. Institutions and belief in the old world

Most parts of the book are dominated by descriptions of the old order. Kezilahabi extensively elaborates the living conditions and ideas which are prevalent in this old world. Only a few pages in the end are devoted to the transition to the new world and the development of ideas for this new order.

⁵ Kezilahabi, Euphrase. 1976. *Johari za Kiswahili – 17 Ushairi wa Shaaban Robert*. Nairobi

⁶ Kezilahabi does not only cover elements of Roman Catholic faith, but he also mentions the Islam and traditional religion in close relation to his elaborations on Roman Catholic faith.

4.1.1. Institutions

Usually religious institutions are meant to be the connection between belief and reality of life. On the one hand there are the locations to perform religious rituals while on the other hand the institutions should provide the 'good example' of how to translate belief into action. In *Mzingile* we find as a location of religious practice the mission church in *Mimi's* village and as a 'good example' the white priest of the church.

In the beginning the mission church obtains great importance in consequence of a pretended miracle. But this miracle is merely a joke of the village's fool *Kichaa* by whom the mission sisters are misled. *Kichaa* doesn't take any effort to put it right, he is rather enjoying the official news: "*Kuna habari kwamba Yesu amewatokea watawa wanne kanisani. [...] Yasemekana Yesu huyo alikuwa mweusi.*" (Kezilahabi 1991:18) – "There is news that Jesus has appeared to four nuns in the church. [...] It is said that this Jesus was black." The so-called miracle leads to the demolition of the old church and the construction of a church of pilgrimage. From then on thousands of ill people come for a pilgrimage to this church hoping to find curing. Some are said to have been healed. The priest also advises *Kichaa* to get his madness cured, but *Kichaa* doesn't take this advice. He knows the miracle was a joke, but even more important: he himself has chosen to be mad. It is his own solution to deal with the real world. Finally he says: "*Sasa ninaanza kuamini kuwa historia hujengwa na vichaa wazushao imani na itikadi*" (ibidem: 19) – "Now I start to believe that history is constructed by mad people who invent belief and superstition." Thus the institution church is justified by a miracle that has never taken place, in other words this church has no justification. But for most people of the village it is the location for religious rituals.

The next story *Kichaa* presents is taking place after the nuclear catastrophe during a period of starvation. At this point of time the people of the village turn away from the church and return to their old practices. They place their offerings under the baobab tree to ask for an end of the famine. The white priest is driven to despair, because he loses his influence and his own prayers do not have any effect. He becomes a drunkard and in his drunkenness he destroys the icons of his church while screaming: "*Mungu gani wewe! Umeniaibisha mbele ya watu weusi!*" (ibidem: 20) – "What kind of a God are you! You have compromised me in front of the black people!" It is not only that the priest has lost faith and demolishes his own sanctuary, but he, as an institution, has lost his authority in the village. To regain his position the priest invents a new kind of religion consisting in parts of the Bible, in parts of the Koran, but he has no success in convincing the people. Just when the priest is at his worst state of mind, the Second Saviour, *Mkombozi wa pili*, is revealing her identity. It is completely unacceptable for the priest that a Saviour should be a woman and so he orders her abduction. Some policemen bring her to a night club where she should strip and, while she offers resistance, she is beaten to death. Her remains are carried back to her village where the priest, considering the famine, gives up the last human principle. He induces the people to

cannibalism and the remains of *Mkombozi wa pili* are served at her own funeral (ibidem: 20; 36-42; 68). This story is showing a crushing image of the institution church which is not able to accept the responsible role of women. Equally the priest – the 'good example' – is deconstructed, because he throws overboard his faith and his humanity in times when they are most needed. So it is only logical that *Kichaa* orders: "*Vunjeni makanisa na misikiti yote! Tuanze misingi mipya! Ni kichaa, kipofu, mwotaji na mwanamke wawezao kuvunja misingi hii mibovu!*" (ibidem: 19) – "Pull down all churches and mosques! Let's start new foundations! It's the madman, the blind, the dreamer and the woman, who can demolish these decayed foundations!"

In the last chapter Kezilahabi provides us with a final example. After the return to his deserted village *Mimi* attends to *Mzee*, who is meanwhile a very old man, who cannot cater for himself anymore. When he gets tired of caring for the old man, *Mimi* suggests, on the pretext of his wish to build a new house, to bring *Mzee* into the church. But *Mzee* refuses. As well as he refuses to be transferred to the mosque. He says: "*Mapadiri, wachungaji, masista wote hawapo. [...] Masheikh wako wapi? [...] Ubaridi uliomo mwenye majengo hayo, uliniuguza kichomi.*" (ibidem: 60) – "The priests, the pastors, the nuns, they are all not here. [...] Where are the Sheikhs? [...] The coldness which is in these buildings has given me stabbing pains." Again the meaning of this scene has to be referred to the institution church. The church does not provide any security or any kind of help. The buildings are abandoned, their doors and windows open – there is no hope, only despair.

4.1.2. Belief

Belief in Roman Catholic faith is mainly manifested through the image of God. There are different aspects of this image such as the unknown origin, the creative power, the omnipresence and the omnipotence. In *Mzingile* these aspects can be recognized in the figure of *Mzee*. While Wamitila first presumed *Mzee* would be life itself (1991: 66), he changed his mind and later called *Mzee* "an examination of the concept of God" (1997: 22). For Gromov (1998: 73) and Chenou (1997: 365) this recognition is already quite self-evident. A detailed examination of *Mzee's* attributes can confirm this interpretation.

In the first chapter the readers find a mystic tale about *Kakulu* who later will be called *Mzee*. "*Hakuna mtu aliyewajua wazazi wake. Kuwako kwake kulianza kama mzaha*" (Kezilahabi 1991: 1) – "There is nobody who knows his parents. His existence began like a joke." Even before his own birth *Kakulu* takes part in the village life by speaking out of his mother's belly. Born as an adult man, he has a grey beard and a preference for baobab kernels. The people of the village are puzzled and even scared, but soon they start to tease *Kakulu* because of his small height. Some time later they realize that *Kakulu* has many abilities and huge knowledge, he even speaks foreign languages. He achieves great reputation and authority in his village. One day *Kakulu* leaves the village together with five old men from the surrounding villages whom he teaches his knowledge. After sending them back he takes

refuge in his hut on top of the mountain. *Kakulu* lights a fire, which is described like the outbreak of a volcano killing many people, and extinguishes it after receiving baobab kernels from the villagers. A few years later the soil near the mountain is the most fertile ever. This introduction to *Kakulu* implies his unknown origin, his omnipotence and also his creative power. He is respected by the villagers as the one who influences their fate and history. "*Mwishowe Kakulu akawa kisasili, akawa mwanzilishi wa taifa, akawako daima. Akawa kweli. Ikaenezwa ulimwengu mzima.*" (ibidem: 4) – "Finally *Kakulu* became a myth, he became the founder of nation, he was always there. He became true. It was spread all over the world."

Another passage of *Mzingile* shows the omnipresence of *Mzee*. At the time when *Mimi* is on his way back to his village he meets a survivor of the nuclear catastrophe, who is living in a deserted area. In one of their conversations *Mimi* asks this young man whether he knows where *Mzee* is living. The answer is: "*Nijuavyo mimi hana makao maalumu. Kila mahali ni kwake. [...] Yeyote yule ambaye amepata kuzungumza na undani wa dhamiri ya nafsi yake amepata kufika nyumbani kwake.*" (ibidem: 48) – "As far as I know he does not have a special domicile. Every place is his home. [...] Whoever has already been talking with the inside of the conscience of his soul has already reached his home." On the one hand this is a proof of the omnipresence of *Mzee* and on the other hand it shows that *Mzee* can only be reached through one's own soul.

In the last chapter *Kezilahabi* draws a direct comparison of *Mzee* with God. During a conversation between *Mwanamke* and *Mimi* about the origins of life we are provided with a remark about the past life: "*Hayo yalianzia katika ndoto za Mzee, yakawa mabaya zaidi alipoamka na kuwafukuza kutoka bustanini.*" (ibidem: 67) – "This [life] started in the dreams of *Mzee*, it became worse, when he woke up and threw them out of the garden." This is obviously a description of the expulsion from paradise.

The old world being at its end God respectively *Mzee* is also at his end. In the conversations with *Mimi* he dissociates himself from human beings over and over again. He is tired of being worshipped, asked for help or being taken as model. "*Sitaki tena kuigwa*" (ibidem: 32) – "I don't like it anymore to be imitated." He makes his point clear: "*Kama kuwako kwenu kunategemea sana kuwako kwangu basi tafuteni mwingine ajaze nafasi niliyoacha wazi. Kisha mfuata nyayo zake. Lakini kadiri nijuavyo, hakuna tena awezaye kusimama katikati ya duara.*" (ibidem: 33) – "If your existence is very much based on my existence, then look for someone to fill the space I have left vacant. Then follow in his footsteps. But as far as I know there is nobody else who could stand up in the middle of the circle." *Mzee* is fed up with his duty and wants the people to find a successor – he himself does not know one, who could achieve his omnipotence symbolised by the middle of the circle. On the other hand *Mzee* does not give up his position voluntarily as we can read from the words of the survivor of the nuclear catastrophe: "*Lakini nionavyo mimi, sura hii mpya haiwezi kuanza hadi Mzee atakapoondoka katika kitovu cha duara.*" (ibidem: 52) – "But as I

see it the new model cannot begin until Mzee has left the middle of the circle." There is no trace of *Mzee* giving up his position by himself, but in the last chapter of *Mzingile* he disappears after heavy rains have caused the house to collapse. Only then the new world starts to be developed.

The concept of God is completely deconstructed. God himself is tired of his own creation and not even willing to save it from abyss. And on top of it all God does not want to voluntarily give way to an alternative concept. The new beginning only succeeds after his disappearing.

4.2. Institutions and belief in the new world

It is not easy to define at which point of time in *Mzingile* the new world actually starts. There is a kind of transitional period where elements of the old world are still present and elements of the new world begin to arise. But the turning-point leading to this transitional period can be clearly identified: "*Ilikuwa siku moja, nilipokuwa nimesimama nje, nilipoona mawingu meusi yanaanza kuzengea anga letu. Ilipofika jioni, giza lilitanda. Mvua ilinyesha usiku mzima hadi kulipopambazuka asubuhi.*" (ibidem: 61) – "One day, when I was standing outside, I saw black clouds beginning to search our sky. When the evening came, the darkness closed in. Rain fell all the night until the morning dawned." This passage marks the beginning of rains destroying the old order and simultaneously providing the resources for the creation of the new one.

4.2.1. Institutions

We can trace the institution church and the institution priest in *Mimi's* deserted village. As already mentioned the priests have all gone when *Mimi* reached his village and met *Mzee*. Then during the rains the leftovers of the church are collapsing even further. One day *Mimi* and *Mwanamke* – while playing – find themselves surrounded by the ruins of the church. They decide to eliminate every single stone and all the books they found in the ruins. "*Tutavichoma vyote, na magofu yote tutayabomoa. Hatutaki tena kumbukumbu za ujinga uliopita. Taifa jipya haliwezi kujengwa kwa kumbukumbu hizo*" (ibidem: 69) – "We will burn them all [the books], and we will demolish all the ruins. We don't want anymore the memories of the ignorance that has passed. The new nation cannot be built upon this memories." Even though the church has already collapsed *Kezilahabi* carries on to destruct. This institution and its remembrances are not needed anymore and are therefore won't exist in the new world.

4.2.2. Belief

While *Mimi* is staying the first night with *Mwanamke* his house in the village also collapses. When they return in the morning, they try to find *Mzee*, but he has disappeared. "*Tulimtafuta kanisani, msikitini na mabuyuni, hakuonekana. Tuliingia mengine yaliyokuwa bado imara, hatukumwona. Tulikata tamaa.*" (ibidem: 64) – "We looked for him in the church, in the

mosque and under the baobab tree, he was not to be seen. We entered other [buildings] which were still stable, we did not see him. We gave up hope." Kezilahabi mentions all three religions, that he has covered in *Mzingile* to a certain extent, and all of them did not shelter *Mzee*. The old man has just vanished and does not play a role in Kezilahabi's elaboration of the new world – until the end of the book. There *Mzee* appears again, climbing the mountain with a book on his back. The interpretation of this final scene seems to be difficult. The book can't be anything else than *Das Kapital* which had disappeared from the ruins of the church as Chenou (1997: 366) also recognized it. Marx' book would be the only old knowledge saved to the new world. This could imply that Kezilahabi judges *Das Kapital* to be the only knowledge worth saving. But with his last sentence he puts it straight: "*Wanyama walikuwa wakicheka!*" (Kezilahabi 1991: 70) – "And the animals were laughing!" There is no comment on what they were laughing, it could be *Mzee* and his try to return and save *Das Kapital* which then seems not worth saving. Therefore, Gromov does not go far enough by saying: "In the final scene of the book the God climbs back to his mountain – it is understood that the world is forgiven and life will start anew" (Gromov 1998: 74).

4.2.3. Description of the new world

Even though Kezilahabi deconstructs the religious institutions and the concept of God throughout his book, he returns to biblical images and religious rituals of the Roman Catholic Church to depict the new world.

The rains that start the transitional process last for seven days. This equals the time God needed to create the world according to the Bible. The old order, symbolised by the old buildings, breaks down. Nature recovers from the draught, rivers and brooks are developing, the first insects and birds are appearing. The whole atmosphere is changing from a barren landscape to a blossoming paradise. *Mimi* regains new joy in life: "*Moyo wangu ukawa umejawa na matumaini mapya.*" (Kezilahabi 1991: 62) – "My heart has been filled with new hope."

After the rains *Mwanamke* appears, picks up *Mimi* from his house and leads him to her fountain: "*Mara niliona dirisha likisukumwa polepole toka nje, likafunguka. [...] Mkono huo ulitoa mwanga kama taa ndefu ya umeme. Niliutazama kwa mshangao. Chumba kizima kilijaa mwanga. Halafu vidole vya mkono huo vikaniashiria nitoke nje. Nilisikia sauti ya mnong'ono ikisema: 'Usiogope!'*" (ibidem) – "Suddenly I saw the window being pushed slowly from the outside and then it opened. [...] This hand spread light like a huge electric light. I looked at it with astonishment. The whole room was filled with light. Then the fingers of this hand signaled me that I should come outside. I heard a whispering voice saying: 'Don't be afraid!' " This appearance of *Mwanamke* resembles the appearance of an angel: she comes from nowhere, she is like a shining light, she asks *Mimi* to join her and she eases *Mimi*, because he seems to be afraid. All this can be found in different episodes of the Bible, e.g. in the scenes of the immaculate conception and the announcement of the Saviour's birth.

After bringing *Mimi* to her fountain, *Mwanamke* asks him to bath with the fountain's water: "*Haya Maji hayo hapo. Yaoge upate kuwa.*" (ibidem: 63) – "Here you are. Here is this water. Wash yourself with it to get to living." After bathing *Mimi's* body takes on the same light like *Mwanamke's*, the sign of the admission to the community of the new people. This clearly stands for the ritual of baptism.

Furthermore Kezilahabi depicts another ritual, a kind of confirmation. In one passage *Mimi* refrains from giving *Mwanamke* the possibility to take responsibility on an equal basis – a relapse to the old order. Consequently a dark spot appears on *Mimi's* left chest and *Mimi* is requested to bath again with the magic water. "*Nilipojitazama kifuani niliona alama nyeusi upande wa kushoto. Sehemu hiyo ya mwili ilikuwa imeacha kutoa mwanga. Nilipojimwagia tone la mwisho palianza kung'ara tena.*" (ibidem: 68) – "When I observed my chest, I saw a black sign on the left side. This part of the body had ceased to spread light. When I poured the last drop over myself it started again to shine." The sign of doubt is washed away through confirming the recognition of the new order.

Most parts of the last chapter are located in a kind of paradise. The carefree existence of *Mwanamke* and *Mimi*, who are living naked like Adam and Eve, is indicated through their daily life. At times they play, at times they embrace each other, at times they go for a walk. Everything is just natural without society's conventions. "*Tulipokuwa tunarudi nyumbani tuliona miti mingi ya matunda ambayo ilikuwa imekwisha weka vijitunda vidogovidogo vibichi. Tulichuma vichache tukaanza mchezo wa kutupiana na wakati huohuo tukijificha nyuma ya mashina ya miti. Tulipochoka tulikaa chini ya mti mmoja kupumzika [...] Tulipochoka na kukaa tulisimama tukakumbatiana.*" (ibidem: 64) – "As we returned home we saw many fruit-trees that were already bearing very small unripe fruits. We picked a few and started a play of throwing at each other and hiding behind the trees' trunks in the same time. When we got tired we sat down under a tree to rest. [...] When we got tired of sitting, we got up and embraced us." The new world is so innocent and clear, that the animals returning to the valley have changed to vegetarians, even the lions and the hyenas.

Towards the end of the book two children appear like a miracle, a girl and a boy. *Mimi* and *Mwanamke* meet them on top of a hill and all of them perform a sign of peace. "*Mmoja akitazama kaskazini, mwingine kusini. Mmoja akitazama mashariki na mwingine magharibi Kwa pamoja, tuliinua mikono yetu juu kama ishara ya amani. Juu ya kilima pakawa na mianga minne katika mmoja ikimulika pande zote za dunia, na chini bondeni wanyama wakila majani*" (ibidem: 70) – "One faced north, another one south. One faced east, another one west. Together we raised our arms as a sign of peace. Up hill there were four lights in one, while they illuminated the whole world, and down hill the animals grazed in the valley." This is the final ritual of the book – the sign of peace.

5. Conclusion

In *Mzingile* Kezilahabi deconstructs important elements of Roman Catholic faith. In search of the meaning of life *Mimi* does not get any help or solutions, whenever he meets with institutions or God himself. But then why does Kezilahabi use Roman Catholic rituals and images derived from the Bible to describe the new world? A possible answer to this question can be found in the last chapter. *Mwanamke* and *Mimi* are discussing the old order and the new world, pointing out that both have their origin in paradise. "*Hayo yalianzia katika ndoto za Mzee, yakawa mabaya zaidi alipoamka na kuwafukuza kutoka bustanini. Haya yanaanzia katika ndoto ya utupu kwenye chemichemi na kuimarishwa na kutoweka kwake Uzee wake uliruhusu kubomoka na kukataliwa kwa misingi iliyopita, na sasa tunayo nafasi ya kuweka misingi mipya. Hii ndiyo sayansi. Sayansi haifuati ujenzi wa tofali juu ya jingine.*" (ibidem: 67) – "This [life] started in the dreams of Mzee, it became worse, when he woke up and threw them out of the garden. This life now starts in the dream of emptiness at the fountain and is manifested by his non-existence. His old age allows the destruction and the renunciation of former foundations, and now we have the possibility to lay new foundations. This is science. Science does not follow the building up of one stone on top of the other." As it seems it is not a matter of using new pictures, but of using a new foundation on which the pictures are based. So Kezilahabi depicts the new world consequently through old images.

The deconstruction of the Roman Catholic institutions and the image of God serves to make one realize that these are only concepts which were originally supposed to facilitate a form of living together. This recognition is the basis on which the creation of a new order can be built. Therefore it seems, that Kezilahabi is not convinced, that Roman Catholic faith could be useful in search of the meaning of life. It is rather the quintessence, which is left after the deconstruction of these concepts, that he understands as helpful and as creative space: the emptiness. Or in the words of Kezilahabi: "*Tulale na tuote juu ya utupu na nafsi yetu*" (ibidem: 68) – "Let us sleep and dream about the emptiness and our souls".

6. References

- Bakhressa, Salim K. 1999. *Kamusi ya Maana na Matumizi*. Nairobi/Dar es Salaam/Kampala.
- Bertoncini Zúbková, Elena. 1989. *Outline of Swahili Literature*. Leiden/New York et al.: E. J. Brill.
- Chenou, Marianne 1997. "Nagona" und "Mzingile", zwei Romane des tanzanischen Autors Euphrase Kezilahabi. In: Beat Sottas et al. (eds.). *Werkschau Afrikastudien – Le forum suisse des africanistes*. (Afrikanische Studien 11). Pp. 362-68. Hamburg: Lit.
- Festival International de Poesía en Medellín 2000. Revista Latinoamericana de Poesía Número 57-58.
<http://www.epm.net.co/VIIfestivalpoesia/html/Memoria10/kezilahabi.html> (23.09.2002, 14:32h).

- Feyte, E. 1997. Le Romancier Tanzanien Euphrase Kezilahabi. *Politique Africaine* 66:126-33. www.politique-africaine.com/numeros/pdf/066126.pdf (23.09.2002, 14:15 h).
- Gromov, Mikhail D. 1998. Nagona and Mzingile – Novel, Tale or Parable? *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 55:73-78
- Kezilahabi, Euphrase 1991. *Mzingile*. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Wamitila, Kyallo Wadi 1991. Nagona and Mzingile: Kezilahabi's Metaphysics. *Kiswahili* 58:62-67.
- Wamitila, Kyallo Wadi 1997. Contemptus Mundi and Carpe Diem Motifs in Kezilahabi's Works. *Kiswahili* 60:15-24.
- Wamitila, Kyallo Wadi 1998. A Philosophical Labyrinth: Tracing Two Critical Motifs in Kezilahabi's Prose Works. *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 55:79-91.

