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Transferring and Rewriting Freedom in Euphrase Kezilahabi

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ABSTRACT

Euphrase Kezilahabi, a Tanzanian poet, novelist and scholar, is an ontological and African interpreter of Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger. He transfers and rewrites Western philosophy in an African way, transforming philosophical concepts into metaphors or oniric images. These elements emerge in his PhD thesis where he explicitly speaks about the importance of the concepts of *Being* in Heidegger and the concept of *Time* in Nietzsche. African *Being* for Kezilahabi is being a prisoner because of pride of ethnicity, pride of Africanness and ethnic morality. That imprisons African *Being* and makes African leaders profit from the manipulation of these elements. According to Kezilahabi, these elements tend to make Africans think in a Fascist way. One of the key features of Kezilahabi's philosophy is liberation. And so it is a philosophy of freedom, with very different meanings, which is the subject of this article. Kezilahabi's philosophy is concerned with liberation. He meditates on the concept of time, taking as his cue the ancient question of "Western" philosophy as to whether time is circular or linear. He uses African elements to resolve this question, and the result is not only African but universal. His philosophy is not a summary of the influences from Western philosophy, but an original deep philosophy by one of the greatest African writers. This article will show his rewriting of these concepts and their political, social and philosophical valence.

Keywords: *Swahili poetry, Kezilahabi, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Rewriting, Transferring, Eternal Return, Nagona, Overhuman, Liberating, Freedom, Philosophy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONNECTIONS

The loss of a 'home country' is an effect of the search for truth, of the re-thinking and reconsidering of all certainties, whether moral, ethical, spiritual, juridical, etc. This loss and the consequent "death of God" are necessary to begin the unmasking of all collective agreements and to liberate man in his essence. Unmasking is the first point in order to arrive at truth and to be free. This is the basis for the advent of a new human being, a free and creative human, who is named by Nietzsche *Übermensch* (Overhuman). This is what we can read in *Also Sprach Zarathustra: Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* ('Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None, 2006 [1883–1885]) and *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift* ('On

Genealogy of Morality’, 2007 [1887]) by Friedrich Nietzsche, as well as in the interpretation of Nietzsche given by Martin Heidegger in *Einleitung in die Philosophie: Denken und Dichten* (‘Introduction to Philosophy: Thinking and Poetizing’, 2011 [1944–45]). The Swahili writer Euphrase Kezilahabi (born in Namagondo, Ukerewe Island in 1944) in many cases follows the interpretation of Heidegger for the hermeneutic of Nietzsche:

There is need to point out to the reader that the word of Nietzsche “God is dead” is understood here in a Heideggerian way, that the destining of two millennia of Western history in which supersensory world made real by the Christian interpretation of philosophy (the ideas, God, the moral law, the authority of reason, progress, the happiness of the greatest number, culture, civilization) suffer the loss of their constructive force and become void. (Kezilahabi 1985: 426).

This process of loss results, as Kezilahabi pointed out, in a form of suffering: “We also do agree with Nietzsche that suffering man is always on the way to truth” (1985: 238). Nietzsche and Heidegger are two of the philosophers who have deeply investigated human nature and the collective agreements. Each one in a different way revolutionised the history of thinking as commented by Kezilahabi: “These philosophers lay bare the nature of the Western world. They are eye-openers.” (Kezilahabi 1985: 5). These German philosophers are fundamental in the thinking of one of the biggest African writers: the Swahili writer Euphrase Kezilahabi. Not only because they are akin in relation to themes and methodology, but also because Kezilahabi thinks that what the *African Being* needs is a process of liberation (Kezilahabi 1985: 5, 6, 357–362). In this sense, he transfers methodology and fights against “concept-mummies” or “tragedy of errors” (1985: 357) and rewrites the concepts and metaphors of the two German philosophers. Kezilahabi (1985: 5) speaks about a “liberating criticism” that “will be materialistic because it will seek or interpret all phenomena in their changingness and development as they interact with other phenomena. In this way it will overcome that static outlook of truth inherent in African metaphysics of traditional man.” The importance of Nietzsche and Heidegger’s thinking is so relevant to Kezilahabi that some elements of his works are a result of rewriting or transferring meaning from the works of the German philosophers. Thus, as Kezilahabi writes (1985: 239): “We shall use Heideggerian, Nietzschean and Marxian lenses on our own eyes, and we shall try as much as possible not to bring into our discussion vulgar anthropology”.

Therefore, this article concerns the rewriting and transferring of meaning and as such it is related to studies of the reception of Nietzsche and Heidegger. In this sense translation is understood as dialogue between texts. Here it is proposed as an analysis of transfer and rewriting by comparing the texts¹. The central point,

¹ The texts are certainly known by Kezilahabi, because they are in the bibliography of his dissertation (1985): 1) Heidegger: *Being and Time, Basic Writings; Nietzsche; On Time and Being; On the Way to Language; Poetry, Language, Thought; The Question Concerning*

which underpins other concepts, is the process of liberation (freedom) of Kezilahabi. For him, freedom coincides with truth, therefore, liberation and the search for truth coincide, and thus describe the duties of literature and existential issues.

1.2 AROUND TRANSLATIONS

Even-Zohar (1990: 20) includes translation in the broader domain of transfer in order to emphasise the relation between transfer and transformation, and in order to emphasise the dynamism and movement of texts. André Lefevere, for his part, includes translation in the broader domain of rewriting in order to contribute “to the study of literature and culture by showing the value of studying translations as elements that play an analysable part in the manipulation of the words and concepts which, among other things, constitute power in a culture” (quoted in Marinetti 2011: 27).

The rewritings analysed in this article are not an isolated and completely rewritten version of another text. Rewriting is a singular but constituent element of Kezilahabi’s works. This is essentially for three reasons: first, the difference of genre between the source texts and Kezilahabi’s works; second, Kezilahabi’s intention of not making a direct link between his text and the other; third, in rethinking and reconsidering he cannot accept an already closed and codified text (according to Kezilahabi, Heidegger’s and Nietzsche’s texts are the best *exemplum* of unmasking the Western *Weltanschauung*, or ‘worldview’, but because of their fame they are already “classic” and, to some extent, codified). In the same way, Itamar Even-Zohar describes the transfer process as “the procedures by which textual models in one system are transferred to another, from canonized to non-canonized literature” (1981: 2).

In Kezilahabi’s view, the methodology and the process of liberation are fundamental. Indeed, Kezilahabi transfers Nietzsche’s concept of *narcoticum* to an African context. As a remedy for narcosis, he offers the *tonicum*, an important existential and aesthetic value (1985: 238–9, 249, 264, 272,). This is necessary in order to search for truth which coincides with freedom. That is why freedom is the key concept of this analysis, because it is the goal of the liberation process and the goal of the search for truth. *Tonicum* is a bitter medicament, so this search causes pain. The pain can assume different aspects e.g. solitude and homelessness (this is because the *Heimat* (home) is transferred from Nietzsche to Kezilahabi through Heidegger, as we will see in the next paragraphs). At the same time, pain

Technology and Other Essays; What is Called Thinking? 2) Nietzsche: *The Birth of Tragedy; Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Indeed, for directly rewriting we use only the texts that are present in this bibliography Heidegger (1996, 2007) and Nietzsche (2000), and for transfer, Heidegger (2011, also in this bibliography) and Nietzsche (2011). This last text it is not in the bibliography, but transfers are also possible via Heidegger (cf. Texts of Heidegger in the bibliography, such as *Nietzsche and Poetry Language, Thought*).

is an effect of this search and is indispensable to it and for an existential process of liberation.

One aspect of pain is the sense of homelessness, which coincides with the interpretation by Heidegger of Nietzsche's search and the idea of search as a journey. As mentioned before, the importance of Heidegger and Nietzsche for Kezilahabi and the intertextual dialogue between them allows us beyond a simple affinity. For example, the key concept of liberation in Kezilahabi and Nietzsche involves the concept of *tonicum*, that means Kezilahabi proposes to do as Nietzsche did "We need a critique of moral values, the value of these values should itself, for once, be examined" (2007: 7). Therefore, other elements are directly rewritten. Rewriting is "the primary way in which cultures construct images and representations of authors, texts and entire periods of history" (Marinetti 2011: 27). Kezilahabi's rewritings are, on the one hand, an adaptation to the Swahili linguistic code, and on the other an adaptation to Kezilahabi's original cultural context on Ukerewe Island. Furthermore, the rewriting can involve both adaptations. In his essay "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation", Roman Jakobson (2002) speaks about these characteristics and potentialities of translation, which for him make it more than "translation proper" (in Pym 2010: 108). Thus, transferring and rewriting correspond to Jakobson's idea of translation.

Using the categories of Jakobson we can say that they are an intralingual translation, because they are a rewording of something far away in space and/or time. In addition to that, transferring and rewriting constitute an interlingual translation, because they are "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language" (Jakobson 1995: 53). In this case, in a certain sense we can claim with Jakobson's words that Kezilahabi's rewritings are a re-creation, as far as they are related to poetry (Jakobson 1995: 61–62). Therefore, the elements discussed in this article are not a mere translation, but an original re-thinking and reconsideration of sources. The relation that Kezilahabi has with sources is always comparison, which lets Kezilahabi transfer and rewrite concepts of Nietzsche and Heidegger. The focus of this article is to analyse how transfer and rewriting contribute to the construction of Kezilahabi's thoughts by comparing texts that were written far apart in time and place. We chose the concept of liberation as the central point of this analysis, because, following Kezilahabi's dissertation of PhD. it involves other questions such as pain, tradition, existence, time, understanding, truth, etc.

1.3 OVERVIEW

Indeed, the first section starts with the concept of pain, as expressed in the first collection of poems, which for Kezilahabi is necessary in the search of truth (for him truth and freedom coincide). The search for truth and freedom (*liberating*) presupposes a journey (at least allegoric), which calls upon homelessness. In this

sense, homelessness is analysed with Freudian tools. In the second section, we continue with the concept of homelessness as a necessary *safari* (journey that will be indicated as transfer itself) to a double process of liberation: 1) liberation from supremacy of morality and ethnicity 2) liberation from the Western world-view. The focus of the third section is the ontological categories of being and time by the analysis of rewriting concepts like Eternal return, Overhuman, Be-there-with and Difference (Between-rift). For these reasons, the analysis proposed here is comparative and hermeneutic. This comparative analysis involves different texts from these authors following Kezilahabi's poetics. The texts of Nietzsche and Heidegger identified in a previous analysis and translation (Gaudioso 2010a and 2013b/2015), which allowed us to be able to individuate these concepts and then compare these with the dissertation of his PhD, where he openly speaks about it, confirming the previous analysis. Furthermore, what we propose here is an analysis of the relationship between the texts, thus, how German philosophers influenced Kezilahabi and how he responds to it.

After my preliminary description of Kezilahabi's poetics (Gaudioso 2013b/2015), the analysis of these 'responses' (here transfer and rewriting) are a contribution to the hermeneutics of Kezilahabi's poetics and philosophy and also to process of construction of these thought this analysis that concern a strictly comparison of texts. In this way we can clarify the influences of Western Philosophy on Kezilahabi and his critical receipt and reworking. Further, the texts of German philosophers are a source with which to identify transfer and rewriting, but due to the different nature of the texts (even assuming – in truth it is not so – that we can strictly classify poetry (Kezilahabi) and philosophy (Nietzsche and Heidegger)), and are also used as tools to analyse Kezilahabi's texts. Thus, for example, at the beginning of the third section, the concept of solitude is neither a transfer nor a rewriting. Through the analysis of Nietzsche's words and Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche, we are able to discover how the metaphoric/allegoric journey is not a simple journey-motif, but a transfer, as it involves on one hand, the question of language as an existential-ontological category (as in Heidegger of *Unterwegs zur Sprache*) and on the other hand, the question of artistic creation (as in Nietzsche especially in *Also sprach Zarathustra*).

2. EDUCATION TO 'EVIL'². THE TRANSFERRING OF *TONICUM*

2.1 A BITTER AESTHETIC MEDICINE FOR BEING

Nietzsche's philosophy of unmasking is very important in analysing Kezilahabi's poetics, because the German philosopher (and philologist) was the first to 'systematically' start the unmasking of the Western *Weltanschauung* ('worldview'). The intention of unmasking is clearly expressed in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Zur Genealogie der Moral*:

So let us give voice to this *new demand*: we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values should itself, for once, be examined* – and so we need to know about the conditions and circumstances under which the values grew up, developed and changed (morality as result, as symptom, as mask, as tartuffery, as sickness, as misunderstanding; but also morality as cause, remedy, stimulant, inhibition, poison), since we have neither had this knowledge up till now nor even desired it. People have taken the *value* of these 'values' as given, as factual, as beyond all questioning; up till now, nobody has had the remotest doubt or hesitation in placing higher value on 'the good man' than on 'the evil', higher value in the sense of advancement, benefit and prosperity for man in general (and this includes man's future). What if the opposite were true? What if a regressive trait lurked in 'the good man', likewise a danger, an enticement, a poison, a **narcotic**, so that the present *lived at the expense of the future*? (Nietzsche 2007: 7–8).³

The narcotic is 'the sleep of consciousness', which makes us accept passively morality, social rules, etc... Nietzsche, as Kezilahabi, opposes to this narcotic the *tonicum* which describes pain. This substitution is undertaken with the aim of starting a process of unmasking and liberating. Indeed, the replacement of the narcotic with the *tonicum* proves necessary to search for truth, freedom, and essence. In Kezilahabi's first book of poems, *Kichomi* ('Sharp pain', 1974), pain plays a big role. It can be like "a cow in the slaughterhouse", as in the poem *Fungueni Mlango* ('Open the door', 1974: 23):

Lakini mwanadamu hatanifungulia.
Damu
Damu puani, damu mdomoni,
Damu kichwani itumikayo kama wino.
Mikono, kichwa, mabega uchovu.
Kwa kichwa kama cha mbuni
Mchangani, tena ninaugonga

But no one opens it for me.
Blood
Blood in the nose, blood in the mouth,
Blood that is used like ink in the head.
Hands, head, back, all tired.
With my head like that of an ostrich
In the sand, again I bang the door

² With the term *evil* we refer here to what scares, hurts and is unknown.

³ Emphasis in original, except the word in bold. In all other examples, we leave the emphasis as in the original version.

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<i>Lakini mwanadamu hatanifungulia.</i>	But no one opens it for me.
<i>Ninaona kizunguzungu</i>	I feel dizzy
<i>Ninapiga kelele kama</i>	I make noise like
<i>Ng'ombe machinjioni:</i>	A cow in the slaughterhouse:
<i>Fungueni mlango!</i>	Open the door!
<i>Mlango fungueni!</i>	The door, open it!
<i>Lakini mwanadamu hatanifungulia.</i>	But no one opens it for me.
	(Trans. by Ranne 2006)

Blood is a fundamental element in *Kichomi* as well as in the whole poetic of Kezilahabi, and occurs several times in this book of poems (Ranne 2006; Gaudioso 2010/2013a/2015). It cannot be read as an isolated element. Also in the novel *Nagona* (female name, 1990), blood is related obviously to pain, but also to memory and writing. Since language and writing are prosthesis and as such, they have return (even if they are extroverted and fading) with the aid of pain (which is the most powerful aid of mnemonics), to wedge into flesh (Frasca 2005: 38). It is not a coincidence if for Nietzsche, too, these elements are related to each other (Gaudioso 2013b/2015). Indeed Nietzsche (2006: 27–28) writes: “Of all that is written I love only that which one writes with his blood. Write with blood, and you will experience that blood is spirit. Whoever writes in blood and proverbs does not want to be read, but to be learned by heart.” According to Nietzsche, pain, the search for truth and freedom, and creation are strongly related. Pain comes from the reconsideration and re-thinking of the instruments of the “creator”, in this case language for the writer. It emerges from the words of Nietzsche when he says “learned by heart” and also in Kezilahabi when he says that he wants to reform the Swahili literary language in order to make it closer to everyday language (1974: XIII). This complexity of pain is expressed in the *kichomi*. It is explained in the poem *Nimechoka* (‘I’m tired’, 1974: 34–35), where pain has an awful and dreadful aspect:

<i>Lakini ninaogopa chini yangu naona miti</i>	But I’m afraid below me I see sharp
<i>Iliyochongwa ikifuata usawa wa waya hii,</i>	stakes, that follow the line of wire,
<i>Ikingoja kwa hamu, kama mshikaki</i>	waiting craving, like a skewer to transfix
<i>kunichoma,</i>	me,
<i>Kunitoboa na kufurahia kimya kimya</i>	to pierce me and silence to enjoy
<i>Uzuri wa kupita katika mwili mwororo wa</i>	the beauty to come in tender meat of
<i>binadamu.[...]</i>	human.

<i>[...]Mimi bado nimening’inia na vitimbo</i>	I still dangle and the stakes have not been
<i>haviiong’oki.</i>	removed,
<i>Lakini pole pole ninaanza kutabasamu.</i>	but I begin slowly to smile.
<i>Sijafika hatua ya kucheka; maana nimechoka,</i>	I have not arrived at the point of laughter;
<i>kichomi kimenipata na sijadondoka.</i>	because I’m tired a sharp pain pervaded
	me and I didn’t fall yet. ⁴

⁴ My translation; all translations of the examples are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

But why this pain? Why the tearing pain? Why the slaughterhouse and the sharp stakes? As already mentioned, the title of this collection of poems is *Kichomi* ('Sharp Pain'). *Kichomi* comes from *ku-choma*, which means "1. Pierce, stab prick 2. (*fig.*) pain, hurt, offend" but also "burn, scorch, scald; set on fire" (Mohamed 2011: 87). So does this pain come from being burned or being torn? In any case we can admit both meanings, as the Swahili language admits the open possibilities of poetry. But the words of the poem *Nimechoka* are really explicit in this regard, "*miti/[...]jikingoja kwa hamu, mshikaki kunichoma*" ('stakes[...]/waiting craving, like a spit to transfix me') and "*kichomi kimenipata*" ('a sharp pain pervaded me'). This type of pain is important not only because it is the title of the collection of poems, and not only for the role that it plays in this book, but also for the intertextual reference it activates. We should recognise this in order to recognise *kichomi* and *mlango* as rewritings of Heidegger's concepts. In the introduction to *Kichomi*, Kezilahabi writes that *Fungueni Mlango* represents the second part of a collection of poems and in this part "especially a question troubled me. The question was the meaning of life. This upset really my heart." (Kezilahabi 1974: XV). Thinking about the meaning of life is not a simple act of thinking, but the declaration of a poetic and of his affinity to Existentialism. So it is not strange if these few elements – like sharp pain, the door, Existentialism, etc. – remind us of the essay by Martin Heidegger *Unterwegs zur Sprache* ('On the Way to the Language'):

The threshold is the ground-beam that bears the doorway as a whole. It sustains the middle in which the two, the outside and the inside, penetrate each other. The threshold bears the between.[...] But what is pain? Pain rends. It is the rift. But it does not tear apart into dispersive fragments. Pain indeed tears asunder, it separates, yet so that at the same time it draws everything to itself, gathers it to itself. Its rending, as a separating that gathers, is at the same time that drawing which, like the pen drawing of a plan or sketch, draws and joins together what is held apart in separation. Pain is the joining agent in the rending that divides and gathers. Pain is the joining of the rift. The joining is the threshold. It settles the between, the middle of the two that are separated in it. Pain joins the rift of the difference. Pain is the dif-ference itself. (Heidegger 2007: 26–27).

Pain as the fundamental element of existence and the centrality of life's experience were prominent literary themes during the second half of the twentieth century. It is the writing itself which tends to be life's experience (Barthes, 1982; Fusillo, 2006/2009; Perniola, 1995). This means that the poetics of Kezilahabi has an affinity with the poetics of the greatest writers of the last fifty years, like Pier Paolo Pasolini, Jean Genet or Ingeborg Bachmann. In these poetics the role played by Existentialism (in this case Heidegger) and by Nietzsche is fundamental and that is why Kezilahabi constantly refers to these philosophers. In all his works the comparison with Heidegger allows an outlining of his philosophy. In fact the terminus *kichomi* is a rewriting of pain, which is described by Heidegger as what

‘divides’ and ‘joins’. That is the same for a skewer, “like a skewer to transfix me,/ to pierce me”, the pierced meat is divided, but also joined. The word *mlango* (‘door’) in the poem *Fungueni Mlango* represents the threshold of existence, which Heidegger treated. In this sense *mlango* represents the rewriting of *Unter-Schied* (‘Dif-ference’), which is the space in the rift where the *Unter-Schied* “bears”. In this poem the lyric ‘I’ does not complain about pain and solitude, but desires them; as the scream at the end of the poem calls upon death, it is a scream of death (Gaudioso R. 2010a, 2013b/2015). Pain is called upon to be the search for truth and existence. These rewritings *kichomi* and *mlango* are adaptations to the Swahili code. This pain, *kichomi*, that is central to the collection of poems *Kichomi*, is the *tonicum* and *kichomi* itself is a *tonicum*.⁵ The search for truth and existence needs this *tonicum*.

2.2 DEATH: EXISTENCE AND RE-GENERATION

In the poem *Karibu Ndani* (‘Welcome’ 1988: 37), in the second collection of poems *Karibu Ndani* (1988), pain also has a regenerative value:

<i>Huu ndio mdundo wenyewe, ngoma ya watu wazima</i>	This is drumbeat itself, the dance of upright humans
<i>Ai! Nani atalishikilia jua! usiku mmoja hautoshi!</i>	Ah! Who will grab the sun! A night isn’t enough!
<i>Ai! Nipigieni makofi, nivunje yangu mifupa!</i>	Ah! Clap-slap me to break my bones!
<i>Ai! Mimi mmeza nyoka, kisha nyuma akatokea!</i>	Ah! I’m the one who gulps the snake, he’ll come out from my back!

Here the lyric ‘I’ calls upon pain “to break my bones”. He is pierced again by something, but this time it’s something alive, a snake. The pain is necessary to regenerate and it can cause death, like the pain that comes from being pierced by a stake or all bones being broken. This death as a symbol in literature has a regenerative value, like the end of the novel *Nagona* (1990), where almost all humans die, but life continues, and in the last chapter *Nagona*⁶ smiles announcing a new or rising humanity. At the same time, in the poem *Kisima* (‘The Well’, 2008: 25) in the collection of poems *Karibu Ndani* (‘Welcome’, 1988), Kezilahabi

⁵ *Kichomi* as a collection of poems itself is also a *tonicum* for Swahili poetry (Gaudioso 2010a, 2013b), because Kezilahabi is not the first to write in Swahili free-verse. The first collection of poems is by Kulikoyela Kahigi and Mugyabuso Mulokozi (1973), but poetry, especially in *Kichomi*, is more revolutionary by reason of his poetic of everyday dialogue and his bitter verses. Elena Zubkovà Bertocini shares this view (in Mulokozi, 2013).

⁶ She is the central figure in the collection of poems *Karibu Ndani* and in the homonym novel, where the protagonist is continuously seeking for her.

urges us to conceive the death of the legendary Swahili hero Liyongo Fumo⁷ as something generative. Death regenerates existence and also generates a new form of relation with the world, a new *Weltanschauung*. In the third collection of poems *Dhifa* ('The Banquet', 2008) death is very much present and almost at the centre of this collection (Gaudioso 2013b/Gaudioso 2015). Death is the beginning and the end of everything. This is shown in the following example taken from *Mahojano na Kifo* ('The Dialogue with the Death', 2008: 42):

*Mshairi: Wewe [Kifo] ni Alpha na Omega
Sema kama hii
Ndiyo maana?*

Poet: You [Death] are Alpha and Omega
say if
is it the meaning itself?

If, in the third collection of poems, death is for the lyric 'I' something familiar, with which to speak, in the first two collections of poems, death is disquieting. Part of this *tonicum* is eeriness, better conveyed by the German word *unheimlich*.

The word *unheimlich* expresses eeriness and the origin of this eeriness. The German word is *un-* (not) *-heim-* (home) *lich* (adjectival suffix), that which gives a feeling of estrangement, the opposite of familiar. Sigmund Freud analysed this feeling in an essay (1991) about a short story by E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Der Sandmann* ('The Sandman', 1816⁸). *Das Unheimliche* (eeriness or the uncanny) for Freud is caused by something that is perceived to be both familiar yet alien at the same time, which causes a feeling of being uncomfortably strange. The uncanny comes from of something that is repressed, so it was familiar, but through repulsion process goes in the sphere of uncanny. That often creates a cognitive dissonance within the experiencing subject, due to the paradoxical nature of being simultaneously attracted to and repulsed by an object. According to Freud, for something to be *unheimlich* it was familiar. Therefore, what is in *Heim*, the *heimlich* is "near" ourselves, instead the *unheimlich* emerges with its potential eeriness in order to approach to something that we think that we not know yet. Thus, this feeling of eeriness is functional to start a knowing/understanding process, to approach what is not already "near".

We can use the same elements to analyse the poetry of Kezilahabi in *Fungueni Mlango* ('Open the Door', 1974). This poem is pervaded by a feeling of *unheimlich*. From the beginning the lyric 'I' is in a room without windows and in front of him there is a door of paper. These elements are both *heimlich* (the lyric 'I' is in a room in a house) and *unheimlich* (the paper door and the room without windows are uncanny). The *unheimlich* increases, like in a nightmare, the door "*unatoa mlio kilio*" (lets out a sinister groan), blood gushes, the tiredness, blood used like ink, the lyric 'I' has vertigo, he feels dizzy and he emits a groan of death (1974: 23):

⁷ Fumo Liyongo lived in an undefined period between the 9th and 13th centuries. He is celebrated as a hero, warrior and poet in traditional Swahili poems, stories and songs. Liyongo himself is credited with many such songs and poems.

⁸ First published in the collection *Nachtstücke* ('Night Pieces') 1817.

*Ninapiga kelele kama
ng'ombe machinjioni
fungueni mlango!
Mlango fungueni!*

Lakini mwanadamu hatanifungulia.

I shout like
a cow in a slaughterhouse
open the door!
The door, open it!
But nobody will open it for me.⁹

3. REWRITING IDENTITY, HOMELESSNESS AND FREEDOM

3.1 HOMELESSNESS AND FREEDOM

Solitude is an emergent theme in the above-quoted poem, *Fungueni Mlango*. Indeed, as Kezilahabi maintains: “*Hewa kunikosa/na jasho kunitoka ndani ya chumba/kwa upweke/ninajiona nimefungiwa.*” (‘I’m out of breath/and I sweat in the room/for solitude/I feel confined’, 1974: 23). This solitude is also a *tonicum* and it is called upon, desired as such, because it is “On the Way of the Creator”, as Nietzsche says:

The voice of the herd will still resonate in you too. And when you will say “I no longer am of one conscience with you,” then it will be a lament and a pain. [...] It is terrible to be alone with the judge and avenger of one’s own law. Thus does a star get thrown out into desolate space and into the icy breath of solitary being. (Nietzsche 2006: 46)

Solitude is felt at the beginning of the journey in search of truth, and for Kezilahabi, as for Nietzsche, this is the duty of the writer (Kezilahabi 1974: 14). In this sense, solitude is a pain, and as such it is also a *tonicum*, but at the same time it is called upon, it is willed, because the path of creation and of the search for truth crosses solitude – and in this sense solitude itself is the necessary *tonicum*. Heidegger’s lectures on Friedrich Nietzsche and Friedrich Hölderlin, collected in the essay *Einleitung in die Philosophie: Denken und Dichten*, influenced not only the ontological and existential conception of Kezilahabi, but also his aesthetics. They extensively explain the double feeling of attraction and repulsion in relation to solitude and the *Heimat*.¹⁰

We call the circumference that is historically enclosed [*umhegten*] and nourishing [*hegenden*], that fuels all courage and releases all capacities,

⁹ Elsewhere (Gaudio 2008; 2010a; 2013a; 2013b) we have translated into Italian the last verse, which occurs three times in the poem, as “*Ma terra e sangue l’uomo, non m’aprirà*” (‘But earth and blood the human, he’ll not open for me’). *Mwanadamu* means human, but we used the etymological sense of *Adam* and translated “*terra e sangue l’uomo*”, because of the repetition of the word *damu* (‘blood’) in the preceding lines and due to the importance of the blood in this poem, as also in the collection *Kichomi* (Gaudio 2010a; 2013a; 2013b; Ranne 2006) and in other works like *Nagona* (Gaudio 2010a; 2013a; 2013b).

¹⁰ Similarly, as explained in the first paragraph, Freud describes this double feeling of attraction and repulsion in relation to *unheimlich*.

that surrounds the place where humans belong in the essential meaning of a claimed listening: the *home* [*die Heimat*]. The birthplace and the region of the country of birth are only the hearth of the home *if* they are already pervaded by the liberated native [*heimatlichen*] essence; [and if,] insofar as they are, they therefore give the gifts [*Geben*] of the home that the modern human – only barely, or rarely, or too late – recognizes and tends as such. Having become God-less and world-less, the modern human is home-less. Indeed, in the absence [*Ausbleiben*] of the God and the ruin of the world, *homelessness* is especially expected of the modern historical human. [...] For this reason, each of the titles applies just as well as the others, such as the one called “Without Home” or another called “The Free Spirit.” To be sure, homelessness is poetized in the poem, yet someone is not merely lamenting the loss of the home; here someone is speaking who at the same time finds the way in the “winter-journey” “toward cold skies.” The person does not look back and no longer flees from the “winter” into the previous world, which he has completely lost and conceded in order to turn his “spirit” out into the “open”. (Heidegger 2011: 24–27).

Thus, the experiences of solitude, of *Unheimlichkeit* and of the feeling of being homeless (*heimatlos*) are *tonicum* (pain, torment) and at the same time are wished for, because they are necessary to the processes of searching for truth, creativity and liberation. Kezilahabi himself, in agreement with Heidegger, writes “the essence of truth is freedom” (1985: 67). Indeed, the motif of journey is not only a motif of world-literature, but, as this comparative analysis shows, a transfer. That is why it is related with *tonicum*, the search for truth and aesthetic creation (as for Nietzsche) and with the existential-ontological question of language (as for Heidegger). This is shown in the poem *Safari* (Journey 1988: 7):

*Wakati nisafiripo kwenda mawioni usiku
Nitazichuma karanga zote zing'aazo angani
Na kuziweka ndani ya mifuko iliyotuna.
Nitakapofika nitafungua kinywa kwa chapatti
Ya dhahabu kabla haijapoa kolimani;
Halafu hapatakuwa na mwanga tena,
Kwani taswira na sitiari zote za nuru
Hazikutufikisha pasipo giza.
Kwa hiyo basi kama mkulima kupofu
Nitapanda mbegu gizani.¹¹*

¹¹ The time of my journey goes from dawn towards night/I'll collect all nuts that shine in the sky/and put them in my pockets./When I arrive I open my mouth for the golden/chapati before it cools on the hill./Then there is no more light,/because all imaginings and metaphors of light/didn't bring us to where there is no darkness./ Therefore, as a blind farmer/ I'll sow into the dark.

The journey – which obviously has a metaphoric meaning – is necessary for these processes. The poem *Namagondo II*¹² in the second collection of poems, *Karibu Ndani* (‘Welcome’, 1988), contains the line “*Nimekuwa mgeni kijijini nilikozaliwa*” (‘I have become a stranger in the village of my birth’). We can use the same words that Heidegger writes about Nietzsche to comment on Kezilahabi’s poem: homelessness as expressed here is not merely lamenting the loss of the home, here the lyric ‘I’ finds the way in the “winter-journey” towards the freedom of spirit. In *Namagondo* we read: “*Yasikieni ya wataalam kwenu walioletwa/sahauni, ule wimbo wa zamani. Zingatieni ya mbolea na ujamaa vijijini*”¹³ (Listen to the experts who were brought to you./Forget that old song./Consider matters of fertilizer, of socialism in the villages).¹⁴ Here, the poet can – still with irony – show a way, while in *Namagondo II* he “has become a stranger”, or, in the last stanza “*Miaka yote ya uhuru imeleta nini Namagondo!*”¹⁵ (‘What have all these years of independence brought, Namagondo?!’). Thus, the journey, the “winter-journey”, must be undertaken, because the *Heimat* is compromised. Indeed, there is the same feeling in the poem *Azimo* (‘Declaration’, 1988: 27), which is related to the Arusha Declaration of 1967, the constitutive socialist proposal. Kezilahabi’s poem expresses the fall of the utopia of socialism of the first Prime Minister and hero of Tanzanian independence, Julius Nyerere:

*Kilichosalia sasa
ni punje za ulezi
zilizosambazwa jangwani
na mpandaji kipofu.*

What remains now
are the grains of finger millet
spread in the desert
by a blind sower.

What Kezilahabi expresses in these two poems is related to nostalgia and to *Heimweh* (homesickness), but also to Heidegger’s “Without Home – that does not here mean that mere lack of home, but rather the loss of the previous one in anticipation of, and searching for, the new one” (2011: 27). Moreover, in the poem *Dhamiri yangu* (‘My conscience’, 1974: 36) we read: “*Lakini lazima nitamke kwa nguvu/hapa nilipo sina uhuru*” (‘But I have to pronounce with power:/Here where I stay I haven’t freedom.’); if, as Kezilahabi writes in his PhD thesis (1985: 67), truth and freedom are strongly related, we have another reason to feel homeless and to undertake the journey. Here it is clearly a process of interpretation and influence. Therefore we consider that the elements of homelessness and the journey are transferred from the philologist-philosopher-poet Nietzsche to the poetry of Kezilahabi via the interpretation of the ontological-existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger.

12 Namagondo is the village on Ukerewe Island where Kezilahabi was born.

13 Kezilahabi 1974: 68.

14 Translation by Annmarie S. Drury (2013).

15 Kezilahabi 1988: 39.

3.2 TRADITIONS, IDENTITY, WORLD-VIEW AND FREEDOM

In this sense, in the conclusion to his thesis, Kezilahabi (1985: 357–358) clearly unmasks the “Errata or a Tragedy of Errors”:

Africa has been plagued with philosophies of origin. In the Western world this very philosophy culminated in Nazi Germany, and we know the consequences of this philosophy. The oldest is not necessarily the nearest to our true Being, neither does it have a mandate to rule the present. It does not greatly matter whether we are the real true heirs to the "Stolen legacy". What matters is what we are. A philosophy of origins is a Fascist enterprise. Philosophies of origins are another error. The third error concerns moralism. We have, in the past, put too much emphasis on moralism and spiritualism. [...] There is no *causa prima* for Africanness and blackness. Since no one is responsible for our Being African and Black no moral facts can be attached to these questions. [...] We have noted that through the glorification of illusory traditional qualities of African society, our leaders create mythologies of a magnificent past and refuse to confront those very institutions which are by their nature retrogressive.

Kezilahabi does not despise origin or culture, but he is against their maintenance and their political *retrogressive* use. Moreover, it also influences his aesthetics. In his article *Ushairi na nyimbo katika Utamaduni wetu* (‘Poetry and song in our culture’, 1981), part of a book about the heritage of Tanzanian culture, he claims:

Tradition doesn't stop. Changes happen from generation to generation. They are those who are crying for the past which in reality will not return. [...] The important question we need to ask ourselves is what changes and to where. But we can't go back and we can't stop changes because what is unchangeable is dead. (Kezilahabi 1981: 137).

Kezilahabi encourages people to accept the changes, but also he himself is a producer of changes. That is the goal of re-thinking and reconsidering all social agreements. The poem *Wimbo wa Unyago* (‘The Song of Unyago’) in the third collection of poems *Dhifa* (‘Banquet’, 2008) is a product of this type and as such it ‘naturally’ pushes the reader to liberation, that is responsibility and freedom. This poem tries to combine tradition with progress and this is visible in the title. The term *unyago* refers to rituals and practices associated with the transition to adulthood of girls, in which older women teach young ones the rules and practices that will lead them to have a healthy and moral sex life during marriage and the rules connected with wedding rites. In this poem the poet pushes young people to live their life, because older people have already lived their life, and even warns women to live in freedom and with responsibility. The poet urges young people to live their life and their time (2008: 17):

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<i>Ishi kijana ishi, ishi maisha yako</i>	Live young people live, live your life
<i>Wazee waliishi yao</i>	Old people lived theirs,
<i>Sasa yamebaki kwako.</i>	Now yours remain
<i>Ukabila ni utumwa</i>	Tribalism is slavery
<i>Olewa msichana olewa</i>	Marry young girl marry
<i>Olewa chaguo lako</i>	Marry your choice
<i>Hiari ni haki asilia</i>	Choice is your natural right
<i>Achaguaye embe bichi</i>	The one who chooses an unripe mango
<i>Ajua lini litaiva.</i>	knows when it will ripen.

In the last stanza he warns the women not to conceive too many children and to worry about their health. If we think that *unyago* is a traditional practice, we can understand what Kezilahabi means when he says that culture and customs don't stand still, they change constantly. That is good because what doesn't change is dead. The element of innovation comes from the requirement of liberating. It's not a coincidence that in the *Song of Unyago* Kezilahabi urges women to feel more free and to be responsible for themselves. According to Kezilahabi (1985), the *Weltanschauung* of Africans has to be liberating. If Africans have to liberate themselves from the primacy of morality and ethnicity, they also have to liberate themselves from a Western *Weltanschauung* (1985: 114, 169, 179, 358). That is the theme of the poem *Kumbe*¹⁶ (1974: 37) in the collection *Kichomi* ('Sharp pain', 1974):

<i>Kwamba elimu walotupa wale wakoloni</i>	Education that was given to us by those colonialists
<i>kama suruali iliyopasuka matakoni,</i>	Like a trouser which has burst at the buttocks
<i>kweli kama ng'ombe waliostushwa</i>	Really, like cows that were scared
<i>na siafu, tumetambua dhahiri.</i>	and ants, we have understood the truth.
<i>Aaa! Kumbe ndoo maana wazee</i>	Aaa! that's why old people
<i>tulipokuwa tukitembea na vitabu</i>	when we walked with books
<i>mabarabarani kwa huruma walitucheka</i>	on the road, with pity they laughed at us
<i>Lo! Lo! Lo! Tulikuwa tukichezewa!</i>	duh duh duh we were being played.

However, Kezilahabi proposes a broad liberation; the African mind must be decolonised. The fundamental aspect of liberation from the Western *Weltanschauung* (world-view) is to reconsider the primary role of knowledge. The new knowing in the poem *Kisima* ('The Well' 1988: 25) is related to this reconsideration:

¹⁶ *Kumbe*: "(1) an expletive used to express surprise over pleasant or unpleasant things happening in reverse of what was expected or thought, (2) a word expressing the contrariness of things or situations; whereas, while, on the contrary." (Mohamed 2011: 382).

*Pandikizi la mtu
kwa hatua ndefu litembealo
na sidano ya shamba kitovuni [...]
Aliyeitia kitovuni kwa hofu
ingawa tegemeo hakulipata
alifunga mlango uelekeao
katikati ya ujuzi na urazini mpya
mwanzo wa kizazi tukionacho.*

The giant
walking with long steps
with a copper dagger in his navel[...]
Who pierced it in his navel for fear
even though support was not given
he opened the door toward
between wisdom and new *ratio*
the first offspring that we see.

The revolution here suggested by Kezilahabi through the figure of giant Liyongo Fumo and his death, as mentioned before, is radical and has the same value as the Oedipus myth. Oedipus kills his father and starts travelling, he runs away chased by the Erynis. Finally, he will be judged in Athens by a court, in which the goddess of wisdom, Athena, will also take part. This civil court excludes the vindictive Erynis, goddesses of the ancestral terror of human beings, and establishes the supremacy of logos. In a Freudian reading, the Erynis, and everything which represents the ‘animal’ element of human beings, is removed, hidden and ready to emerge at any time. The revolution of Kezilahabi aims to break the inner human/animal dichotomy and to recover a more direct way to relate man to nature and to the world, where knowledge is not an object. It is a new Humanism, where human perception is shaped as something “in between the wisdom and the new ratio”, that is intuition as a form of knowledge.

How do the farmer, the fisherman, etc. know it is time to change their style of response? – through listening to the tune of the cosmos and through intuition. Listening to the silent language of the fourfold world is speaking. Farmers, fishermen, etc. speak silently as they respond and yield themselves to the call of Being, and as language discloses itself from concealment and speaks to Being. Intuition rather than intellect is the main phenomenon of passage. Thus a cold breeze of a special king will communicate to the farmer’s face and body, and he will respond intuitively. (Kezilahabi 1985: 241)

Oedipus’s journey, as for the lyric self in *Karibu Ndani* and *Nagona*, is necessary to re-establish a new *Heimat*, and as a *tonicum* “makes the logos accessible to understanding” (1985: 272). The concept of home, however, has more values. *Heimat* for Kezilahabi is his native village Namagondo, but it also has a metaphorical value. In fact, the poem itself is configured as the house of the poet (1974: XIII). Therefore, there is another reason to make a journey: if poetry is the home of the writer, he should undertake the journey, because “*kwani taswira na sitiari zote za nuru/hazikutufikisha pasipo giza.*” (Kezilahabi 1988: 7) (‘Because symbols and metaphors of light/ didn’t drive us where there is not darkness.’). In this sense the importance of language must be understood in Kezilahabi’s poetic. Even language has to be liberated – and in this sense Kezilahabi’s thought is shown in all its universal flow – from the dogmatic division between subject and object. This has been extensively explained by Alena Rettovà (2004: 54):

“Now, I think we should found a new language,” I voiced a thought.
“Me too, I have been thinking of this. We will need a language that does not contain the issue of Man and Thing.”

“This language should also not contain words like ‘nuclear’ and ‘war’. We shall create a language whose foundation is being.” (Kezilahabi 1991: 69) [...] Fortunately, Kezilahabi’s dissertation offers clues to these questions. Kezilahabi’s project of “onto-criticism” seeks to “avoid the tragic epistemology of Western man” (Kezilahabi 1985: 219) and go beyond “the categories of Subject/Object” (Kezilahabi 1985: 215) in understanding the “ontological aspect of metaphor, symbol and ritual” (Kezilahabi 1985: 215). This is the task of onto-criticism, which Kezilahabi opposes to techno-criticism, as an external, objectifying attitude to literature and art.¹⁷

In this way a homeland is given back to language, that is, the language returns to have its ground, creative and adamitic value. It seems like an echo of the German philosopher Johann Georg Hamann, whose work was used by his student J. G. Herder as a main support of the *Sturm und Drang* movement, and his thinking is considered as Counter-Enlightenment. Hamann (2002: 2) stated that “Poetry is the mother-tongue of the human race; even as the garden is older than the ploughed field, painting than script; as song is more ancient than declamation; parables older than reasoning; barter than trade.” In this sense the philosophy of Kezilahabi carries out a liberation and re-evaluation of what is “repressed”, removed, in order to let the regenerative, creative and “projective” elements of essence emerge.

An onto-critic extends the domain of understanding beyond objectification and identifies language with Being. The onto-critic is engaged in the liberation of the words from convention, and seeks to displace and decenter logocentrism and signification by making relations empty of meaning and by dismantling the resemblance of language to the world. Because the economic and political situations in Africa are fundamental to our future destiny, the onto-critic has to retain the idea of literature as a form of consciousness. The onto-critic therefore rejects theories of uniqueness to literature and the reduction of it to a moral endeavor. To an onto-critic, therefore, literature is not a reorganization of impulses but an ontological understanding that is projective. (Kezilahabi 1985: 217–218).

That is the new *Heimat*, the meaning of research, the wished *Heimat* (Heidegger, 2011: 27), where language is no longer alienated from reality and action¹⁸:
Ninapotea katika bahari ya ndoto/ndani ya msitu uliofungama/ambamo kufikiri

¹⁷ The quoted translation by *Mzingile* (Kezilahabi 1991) is by Rettovà.

¹⁸ We have already focused on Kezilahabi’s “utopia” of language (Gaudioso 2010a, 2013b), in the latter by a comparison with the essay by Roland Barthes, *Le degré zéro de l’écriture* (1953).

bila vitendo ni kuwa msaliti (Kezilahabi 1988: 15) ('I am lost in the sea of dreams/inside the thick forest/where to think without actions is to be a traitor').

4. TO BE IN TIME, OR RATHER BECOMING-BETWEEN. REWRITING BEING AND TIME

4.1 THE ETERNAL RETURN AND THE OVER-HUMAN

Panta rei, all flows, all changes and lives. Existence is changingness, thus time emerges as a fundamental element. Indeed, time is central to Kezilahabi's thinking. He considers that nothing happens out of it, time and existence are closely linked. Time links 'being' and 'becoming', because what will be is already *in nuce*, that is its potential future.

It can be stated generally that existential time, in the African context, does not separate "being" from "becoming". Here "being" is defined as social reality resulting from socio-historical practices and revealed from concealment by the human condition as truth. In short "being" is that which reveals itself in the context of truth. "Becoming" will be understood as a process and state of existential change in the very essence of beings. Time is the horizon in which being and becoming take place. [...] Since Becoming involves change, it is Becoming that gives the idea of motion and therefore the idea of potential future. The future is not separable from being, and for this reason nothing can become without being and vice versa. (Kezilahabi 1985: 124–125).

In his PhD thesis Kezilahabi questions himself about time, in order to overcome the conception of linear or circular time. Time is not circular, because he states that in being there is already a potential future, that is not a return to the past. At the same time it is not a linear conception, because the future is inscribed in the present, in being. Indeed in his thesis he writes:

Through constant Being and Becoming the self returns to its innermost self and gathers the totality of Being with the fourfold world to create a sense of belonging together in "the eternal recurrence of the same" which manifests itself in the cyclical time of annual and seasonal ceremonies, and in rituals of Becoming. [...] Rites of passage are a temporalizing of the unity of time in the eternal now. (Kezilahabi 1985: 240–245).

An individual history in its social context shows itself as a cyclical recurrence of events. It is the focus of these verses of the poem *Nondo* ('Mot'h, 1988: 13) in the collection of poems *Karibu Ndani* ('Welcome', 1988):

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<i>Nje kuna giza na upepo unaimba wimbo wa upweke na woga. [...] Moyo unaanza haraka kupiga ngoma na kalamu yangu yaparaza karatasi nao miguu isojunga yagongagonga sakafu.</i>	Outside there's darkness and wind sings the song of loneliness and fear. [...] The heart begins to drum fast and my pen grazes the paper and my legs parallel to each other hit the floor.
<i>Sekunde zawa miaka na dakika karne. Nacheza historia yangu mwenyewe.</i>	Seconds become years and minutes decades. I am playing my own history.

Again, the solitude and fear (at least as pain that arises from the anticipation of evil¹⁹) are pain. Thus, they are a *tonicum*, which the lyric 'I' needs, in this case in order to play "my own history". That is related to the conception of time as a "spiral of anyone" (Kezilahabi 1985: 282–283), which recaps in itself the conceptions of circular time and linear time. Therefore, cyclic time not only holds these events, but also it is celebrated by them and in them finds its own essence.

The eternal now is an affirmation not only of life but of Being itself. It is ekstasis that rescues thinking from the onslaught of theoria and liberates language from grammar. This intensified emotional rapture is not therefore expressible in normal language. It is a kind of metalanguage, an assertive power of the self-encapsulated in ritual, music, magic and poetry – a moment in depth. [...] Ritual, music, magic and poetry are the four elements of African culture through which the eternal now is realized. (Kezilahabi 1985: 126–127).

We should remember, as we said in the first part of this article, that the *tonicum* is a characteristic element of ritual. In this case the poem *Karibu Ndani*, quoted in the first paragraph, seems to be a recap all these elements: the *tonicum* and cyclical time. But in the perspective of this article it is very important for another reason: the snake in the poem *Karibu Ndani* ('Welcome', 1988) quoted in first paragraph, has metaphoric/allegoric values, and is a rewriting of the parable-dream of Zarathustra about a shepherd and a snake in Nietzsche.

And truly, I saw something the like of which I had never seen before. A young shepherd I saw; writhing, choking, twitching, his face distorted, with a thick black snake hanging from his mouth. [...] My hand tore at the snake and tore – in vain! It could not tear the snake from his throat. Then it cried out of me: "Bite down! Bite down! Bite off the head! Bite down!" – Thus it cried out of me, my dread, my hatred, my nausea, my pity, all my good and bad cried out of me with one shout. [...] Meanwhile the shepherd bit down as my shout advised him; he bit with a good bite! Far away he spat the head of the snake – and he leaped to his feet. – No longer shepherd, no longer human – a transformed, illuminated, *laughing* being! Never yet on earth had I heard a human being laugh as *he* laughed! (Nietzsche 2006: 127).

¹⁹ Aristotele: "Let fear be defined as a painful or troubled feeling caused by the impression of an imminent evil". (1926: 201).

This parable-dream of Zarathustra is very important in Nietzsche's philosophy in order to describe fundamental concepts like *Ewige Wiederkunft* ('Eternal Return') and *Übermensch* ('Overhuman'). We questioned the difference between the fate of the snake in Nietzsche and Kezilahabi. We thought that, if in Kezilahabi the snake penetrates into the body of man and goes out of his back and both survive, it depends on a more "peaceful" relationship between human beings and nature and between human beings and God (Gaudioso 2013b, 2015). Indeed Kezilahabi writes in his thesis about elements in which the eternal now is realized, elements that "impose an illusion on man and reality and appearance become inseparable." (1985: 126). Upon interviews in Ukerewe (August 2014), it came out that according to the Wakerewe,²⁰ the big snake, the Python, is God. They cannot kill the Python and it is taboo to look at the body of a dead Python. If anyone kills the Python, he must name his child after the name of the Python in Kikerewe, the language of the Wakerewe, otherwise his child will die. Indeed, understanding the rewriting and adaptation from the Ukerewe culture or metaphor of the snake makes the results more clear. But there are other elements of rewriting from *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. We asked the same people about the meaning of the name "Nagona" in Kikerewe. From the interviews it was recorded that the name means that she is everywhere and everything comes by her, because she accepts everything, the good and the evil. Nagona and the *Übermensch* (Overhuman) accept both the good and the evil that come from life. They can accept that even a worst pain always returns and is the same forever, so they accept the *Ewige Wiederkunft* ('Eternal Return'). The acceptance of it is a sign of *Wille zur Macht* ('Will to Power'), which means to accept and to will the continual becoming (Kezilahabi 1985: 424) (Gaudioso 2015). It ousts every half will in order to liberate the will from everything chained to it and to make the repetition the object itself of will. In this case, differently from the *narcoticum*, accepting everything after the experience of *tonicum* is not the 'sleep of consciousness', but rather having access to a 'superior' one.

Pain is also a joy, a curse is also a blessing, night is also a sun – go away or else you will learn: a wise man is also a fool. Have you ever said Yes to one joy? Oh my friends, then you also said Yes to *all* pain. All things are enchained, entwined, enamored – if you ever wanted one time two times, if you ever said "I like you, happiness! Whoosh! Moment!" then you wanted *everything* back! – Everything anew, everything eternal, everything enchained, entwined, enamored, oh thus you *loved* the world – you eternal ones, love it eternally and for all time; and say to pain also: refrain, but come back! *For all joy wants – eternity!* (Nietzsche 2006:263).

In order to access this awareness, the question of time is fundamental, as we saw above; that is because both Kezilahabi and Nietzsche are characterised by

²⁰ Wakerewe means 'the people from Ukerewe'. I would like to thank the people who agreed to speak with me (Valentini Msironga, Edimundi Makaronga, Deusidedit Mussleki Makene na Ayubu Luhasile Mutobe) and for great help from Gaudensia Emanuel and Richard Tumaini.

expectations. In this sense Nagona as an adaption of both culture and language code is a rewriting of the *Übermensch*.

4.2 BEING TIME

Kezilahabi considers that time is the measure of life and there is nothing which can be outside of it. Time has its own rhythm. For an African this rhythm comes with the foundation of humanity and relations with those who have passed. This rhythm is in the outlook of time in Existentialism (2006: 164–168). This centrality of time we can find in all the poetic production of Kezilahabi (Gaudioso 2013b/2015). In the first collection of poems *Kichomi* ('Sharp Pain', 1974), in the poem *Upepo wa Wakati* ('The Wind of Time', 1974: 4), he writes "*Hivyo ndivyo ulimwengu ulivyo./ Na hivyo maisha ya binadamu./ Wanapanda na kushuka/wakisukumwa na upepo wa wakati.*" ('Exactly like this is our world./ And the life of human beings./They raise and lower/Pushed by the winds of time.').²¹ Also in the second collection of poems *Karibu Ndani* ('Welcome', 1988), in the poem *Kuishi* ('To live', 1988: 9): "*Kulikuwa na wakati tulikuwa/sasa mcheko wajaza utupu wa/pale tulipokuwa.[...]/Tusemalo halisikiki, isipokuwa/kulikuwa na wakati tulikuwa.*" ('There was time when we were/But now laughter fills the void/of where we were.[...]/What we say is not heard, although /there was a time when we were. '). And in the third collection of poems *Dhifa* ('Banquet', 2008), in the poem *Wazo nje ya Wakati* ('A thought out of Time', 2008: 25): "*Kifo/ ni wazo nje ya wakati.*" ('Death/ is an idea out of time'). In the same collection Kezilahabi (2008: 25) writes *wakati* ('time') as *wa-kati* that is a rewriting of the concept of Heidegger *Mitda-sein* (Being-there-with).

The *Mitda-sein* of others is disclosed only within the world for a *Da-sein* and thus also for those who are *Mitda-sein*, because *Da-sein* in itself is essentially being-with. The phenomenological statement that *Da-sein* itself is essentially being-with has an existential-ontological meaning. [...] Being-with is an attribute of one's own *Da-sein*. *Mitda-sein* characterizes the *Da-sein* of others in that it is freed for a being-with by the world of that being-with. Only because it has the essential structure of being-with, is one's own *Da-sein* *Mitda-sein* as encounterable by others. (Heidegger 1996: 113).

Wa-kati is be-between, that is a rewriting of Heidegger's concepts *Unter-Schied* and *Mitda-sein*. *Unterschied* means difference, but as Heidegger writes in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* *Unter-Schied – unter-* ('between, under') *Schied* ('detachment, rift') – is the space between the rift, but also under the rift, where the rift "bears". *Kati* in Swahili means between and *wa* is to be, *wa-kati* is a rewriting of *Unter-Schied*, but in the Kezilahabian term, as the author explains

²¹ Translation by Ranne 2006: 113.

(2008: 25), there is not a separation, but a continuous movement of Being. We have already recognized *mlango* ('door') as a rewriting of *Unter-Schied* (difference), but that doesn't exclude other rewritings from the same author. The two poems where we can read these rewritings were composed thirty years apart. Moreover, in *Dhifa* ('Banquet', 2008) we find *mlango* related to existence (2008: 58). *Wa-kati* is also a rewriting of *Mitda-sein*, because existential-ontological *wa-kati* shows the union and the movement of Being, being in changingness. Indeed, to borrow the words of Nietzsche (2006: 263), it refers to "everything anew, everything eternal, everything enchained, entwined, enamored, oh thus you *loved* the world". This enchainedness, entwinedness and enamoredness of things is expressed by *wa-kati* in the axis of time (the unity of be and becoming) or of existence (the unity of essence and existence). In *wa-kati* there is the solution that Kezilahabi proposes about the circularity or linearity of time like a spiral (1985: 280–284) and also the overcoming of the separation of subject/object. The same elements are expressed in the poem *Muungano* (Union, 2008: 56), where Kezilahabi confirms the overcoming of subject/object and the unity of truth and freedom.

<p><i>Muungano ni wazo lilojaliwa likadondoka mikononi mwa mkunga kipofu</i></p> <p><i>likawa kubwa kichwa cha mtoto. Ni fundo la tambara bovu gumu lilofungwa na Jitu.</i></p> <p><i>Sharti meno yatumike kulifunda mchanga ulo ndani umwagike kuchafua ndimi zisemazo ukweli-huru.</i></p>	<p><i>Union is the thought born, that is dropped in the hands of the blind midwife</i></p> <p><i>And becomes like the head of a baby</i></p> <p><i>It is a bad and hard knot of tatters tied up by Object</i></p> <p><i>It is a must that teeth are used to pound sand that is inside to spill to tarnish the tongues that tell the truth-free.</i></p>
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In this sense *wa-kati* is both a rewriting of the concepts of Heidegger and a critique of them. In so far as *wa-kati* is a rewriting, it shows that Kezilahabi accepted Heidegger's concepts, but at the same time he rewrites them in the light of his own philosophy, creating a new concept.

5. CONCLUSION

Translation goes beyond the boundaries of occasional practice, during which a new play comes from the original one, and becomes usual practice. The translation of forms and meanings, of concepts and metaphors, becomes a transfer of meanings and rewriting. This study has proposed an analysis of this kind of dialogue between Nietzsche's and Heidegger's works and those of the Swahili writer Kezilahabi. We have seen how Kezilahabi used transfer and rewriting in order to create meaning in his context for the purpose of unmasking and liberating.

In the first section, we identified the concepts of *narcoticum* and *tonicum* as common and connected concepts in Nietzsche's and Kezilahabi's thoughts. The concept of *tonicum* and *pain* allowed us to analyse in depth the term *kichomi* making it appear as a rewriting of that pain expressed by Heidegger in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, that is the pain that "divides" and "joins". Pain rends, but remains at the "threshold" that draws everything to itself. This is *Unter-Schied* (Difference), which allows the existence and it's exactly the subject of the poem *Fungueni Mlango* ('Open the Door', then the threshold). Indeed, we can recognise *mlango* as a rewriting of *Unter-Schied* ('Dif-ference'). We have also shown that the experience of pain, in literature, also means to experience fear; the etymology of Freud's concept of *unheimlich* ('eery, uncanny') led us to explain the concepts of *Heimat* and journey.

In the second section, we have seen how Kezilahabi transferred the process of Nietzschean unmasking; this is needed to search for truth. We should remember that truth for Kezilahabi coincides with freedom. We have also shown how this search for truth causes solitude, pain and a sense of homelessness, from which derives the transfer of the journey. This process is necessary to the dual release of African Being. On the one hand, being has to be released from the primacy of morality and ethnicity, and on the other hand from the Western *Weltanschauung*. Here, too, both German philosophers are landmarks of reflection for the Swahili author, not only to distance himself from the Western *Weltanschauung*, but also because Kezilahabi uses their ideas as tools to investigate the African world and subject it to the same criticism. We have also seen how the concepts of *heimat*, homelessness, journey and *new heimat*, have been developed in the poetry of Kezilahabi in dialogue with Heidegger and Nietzsche. These elements are essential for the pursuit of truth and, considering that truth coincides with freedom in Kezilahabi's work, for the process of liberation.

In the third section, we have analysed the rewriting of key terms and concepts of Nietzsche's and Heidegger's philosophy. We have seen how the allegorical description of Nietzsche's *eternal return* has been rewritten according to the culture of Ukerewe Island in Lake Victoria in Tanzania where Kezilahabi has his origins. Through an investigation of the name "Nagona" it was possible to discover some important connections with the Nietzschean *Übermensch*. Based on these elements, we have seen how Kezilahabi arrived at a synthesis of linear and circular time suggesting a spiral. Time is at the core of Kezilahabi's reflections and his ontological and existential ideas. Between "be" and "becoming" there is no difference, the potential future is inherent in the present. Thus, we have seen how Kezilahabi, in dialogue with and in opposition to Martin Heidegger, rewrites his *Mitdasein* (Be-there-with) and *Unter-Schied* (Between-the rift) turning it into *wa-kati* (be-between).

Recognising rewriting is fundamental for the exegesis of Kezilahabi's texts, because in this way we are able to make a comparative analysis. This lets us make a deep interpretation of the texts and also recognise their cultural, allegoric and politic value. The description of these elements of transferring, rewriting and

influence shows an original philosophy beyond the borders. However, since these rewritings and transfers reflect on Nietzsche and Heidegger's philosophy – their “lenses in our own eyes” (Kezilahabi 1985: 239) – they push forward – in different time and space – these philosophers. Thus, they are a document of the African reception of these philosophers, that belongs to the history of reception and hermeneutics of the texts of Nietzsche and Heidegger. This does not mean that Kezilahabi's philosophy is only a reworking of what he has been influenced by, but rather it shows his capacity for dialogue and his ability to propose a philosophy and aesthetics – with his own choices (Gaudioso, 2010a, 2013b, 2015) – that are tragically current, or to use the words of Nietzsche, constantly *Unzeitgemäss* (anachronistic). The philosophy of Euphrase Kezilahabi, together with his poetics, is able to rework and push forward universal thinking and the aesthetic literary experience, proposing new challenges for the future.

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