AFROPHONE PHILOSOPHIES: POSSIBILITIES AND PRACTICE. THE REFLEXION OF PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES IN EUPHRASE KEZILAHABI'S *NAGONA* AND *MZINGILE*[1]

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Makala haya yanapendekeza dhana ya "falsafa za lugha za Kiafrika" badala ya dhana kama "falsafa za kimapokeo" au "falsafa za kienyeji" ambazo zinatumiwa katika mjadala kuhusu "falsafa ya Kiafrika" siku hizi. Yanaieleza dhana hii kinadharia na kutoa maoni kwamba fasihi za lugha za Kiafrika ndivyo vyombo vya kuitekeleza kazi ya kifalsafa katika jamii za Kiafrika za kisasa. Katika muktadha huu, makala yanazingatia jinsi dhana za falsafa ya Magharibi zinavyoakisiwa katika maandishi ya Euphrase Kezilahabi, *Nagona* na *Mzingile*.

Introduction

My paper is divided into two parts. In the first part, I will define the basic concepts, such as "African philosophy" and "Afrophone philosophies", their relationship and the general context of the debate on "African philosophy". I anticipate my definition here and say that "Afrophone philosophies" are those discourses that are the medium of philosophical reflexion in a given culture. Thus in the second part of my paper, I will concentrate on one specific case of a philosophical reflexion, that of reflecting philosophical influences in the late works of Euphrase Kezilahabi, *Nagona* (1990) and *Mzingile* (1991).

1. Definition of the basic concepts and the context of African philosophy

1.1. African philosophy

The discourse of what is called "African philosophy" has established itself as an academic discipline in the middle of the past century. According to its prominent historian, Dismas A. Masolo, of Kenya, the book to be considered the beginning of this debate was Placide Tempels'

Bantu Philosophy, which appeared for the first time in a French translation in 1945 (Masolo 1994: 46, Tempels 1945).

Of course, this does not mean that there were no philosophical debates in Africa prior to that date, or that in today's African philosophy, the writings of individuals who published their works before Tempels are irrelevant. In fact, I have cited that date in order to create a distance to the concept of "African philosophy" and to propose a pragmatic definition of it as a specific discourse, set in its historical conditions and influenced by them in form and contents.[2] To see what "African philosophy" is, it is perhaps best to browse through any of the numerous recent anthologies, introductions, historical overviews or encyclopaedias that present African philosophy as an established academic discipline with a fairly firm inner division and contents.[3]

African philosophy is thus in no way representative of *all* philosophical currents in Africa, it may also not be an *adequate* representation. Nevertheless, it is a discourse that has in itself the possibilities of access to African philosophical ideas and furthering its knowledge of them, as well as the possibility of a critical reflexion on its own methodology and of a development of its cognitive tools. As a general discourse, it has the potential of interdisciplinary co-operation as regards the contents and the methodology (on the issue of interdisciplinarity, cf. Kresse 2002a, Kresse 2002b).

In the past decade, a number of monographs have been published (or re-edited) in African philosophy that demonstrate great concern about approaching indigenous thought systems and about the issue of making use of them in present-day philosophy.[4]

In this place, I would like to mention only one study, the project of the German philosopher Kai Kresse, who focused on the philosophical discourse in Mombasa. Kresse emphasizes the need to study as philosophy that which is considered as important intellectual discourse by the society. As he writes:

> My aim was [...] to follow internal discourses of knowledge in Old Town Mombasa
> with a particular focus on how they generate reflexivity, and express critical

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[2] This definition comes close to Hountondji's definition of African philosophy": „J'appelle *philosophie africaine* un ensemble de *textes*: l'ensemble, précisément, des textes écrits par des Africains et qualifiés par leur auteurs eux-mêmes de «philosophiques»." („I call *African philosophy* a group of *textes*: precisely, the group of texts written by Africans and qualified by their authors themselves as 'philosophical'.") (Hountondji 1977: 11, my translation). Nevertheless, the concept of discourse delimits the boundaries of „African philosophy" very differently: for one thing, it is not only Africans who participate in this discourse. I do not find the second part of Hountondji's definition, the description of the texts as philosophical by their authors, satisfactory either; however, a detailed argument against it goes beyond the limits of this paper.

[3] In the last ten years, these works have appeared: introductions and history: Bidima 1995, Hallen 2002, Imbo 1998, Masolo 1994, Rettová 2001; anthologies: Coetzee & Roux 1998, English – Kalumba 1996, Eze 1997, Eze 1998, Mosley 1995; encyclopaedias: Deutsch & Bontekoe 1997, Smart 1999.

[4] Eg. Ephirim-Donkor 1997, Gyekye 1995, Hallen & Sodipo 1997, Hallen 2000, Kwame 1995, Oruka 1990, Wiredu 1996, Wiredu & Gyekye 1992. For a more detailed description of this tendency, see Rettová 2004a.

> discourses and self-awareness in society. In this, I focused on intellectuals who were of particular interest in this respect [...], active in Islamic scholarship, healing, and poetry, the three most prominent local categories for intellectuals for the Swahili context. (Kresse 2002b: 31)

This effort to "situate and contextualize the study of African philosophical discourses in culturally specific African intellectual and religious discourses" (Kresse 2002b: 27) includes a consistent use of an African language during the research (cf. also Kresse 1999, Kresse & Wiredu 2000), and it also opened the door to literature as a point of reference of African philosophy.[5]

1.2. Afrophone philosophies

The call for a study of philosophy adjusted to the specific cultural context of a society points to a functional understanding of philosophy: philosophy is that discourse within a society which fulfils the function of reflecting various influences affecting the society.

Now, it is clear that it is not the discourse of African philosophy that serves this purpose in African societies. African philosophy has always come from outside, it is not a local intellectual tradition but at best a discourse *on* local intellectual traditions.

In view of this functional understanding of philosophy, it is also clear that the search of many scholars for an antiquated "traditional philosophy", uninfluenced by modernity and untainted by colonialism, is misguided and the restrictions they often impose on their research are in fact hampering it: from the requirement of illiteracy of the informants (Oruka 1990) to the bias of favouring oral discourses (such as proverbs, recorded interviews with informants etc.) as materials from which to draw conclusions concerning the "philosophy" of an ethnic group. Written literatures go largely unheeded.[6]

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[5] Apart from Swahili poetry, Kresse himself has dealt with oral Zulu praise poetry (Kresse 1998) and with the work of the Ugandan scholar Okot p'Bitek, written in English and in Acholi (Kresse 2002a).

[6] I am referring here to the situation, to name one rather representative example, where excellent works on Yoruba philosophy are written (Hallen & Sodipo 1997, Hallen 2000) that draw on interviews with Yoruba *onisegun* (healers and diviners) and quote extensively many *Anglophone* sources on Yoruba wisdom and thought, but the outstanding Yoruba writers who have produced works having a deep philosophical dimension go unnoticed, not out of negligence, but for reasons of the chosen methodology. Gbadegesin (1991: 118) makes a brief mention of Fagunwa, but the more recent literature, where elements of „Yoruba philosophy" (in the sense of worldview, wisdom, beliefs etc.) get reflected and creatively developed, escapes the attention of philosophers altogether. The cleft between African philosophy and literary theory is somehow much wider than that between African philosophy and anthropology or ethnography.

For a tentative philosophical reading of Fagunwa, see Rettová 2002, see also Bamgbose 1974. Concerning the reflexion of traditional Yoruba wisdom in modern literature, see the excerpt from the novel by 'Lasunkanmi Tela, *Osuolale* (published 1998), translated by Alena Nováková, and Nováková's short commentary on it, in the „African Reader" (Tela 2003).

I propose the term "Afrophone philosophies"[7] to designate those discourses that fulfil the function of philosophy in a given African society. Therefore, Afrophone philosophies are the discourses that are the medium of philosophical reflexion in a given culture. Which are they?

It is my contention that the leading role in today's African societies is to be attributed to African literatures, and especially those using African languages.[8] It is in those that both foreign and indigenous, both modern and traditional influences get reflected, elaborated, and creatively appropriated or rejected. For any tradition must be reflected and developed, even one's own. Of course, it is not only written forms of literature that are the medium of reflexion of philosophical ideas, but also oral literatures (see for example Kresse 1998) and popular songs and music[9].

The term "Afrophone philosophies" lays great emphasis on language. The criterion of language is a simple one, yet, it is a very effective differentiation. Individual languages carry specific conceptual schemes and evoke specific cultural contexts.[10]

But perhaps just as important as these qualities is the existence of a shared discourse, of a public. Language then becomes a double-sided issue. One must account for operatively bilingual authors – and indeed, bilingual discourses –, and so it is both context (namely the context of a specific discourse to which a work contributes) and language that determine whether certain works are to be classified as "Afrophone philosophy".[11]

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[7] This term avoids the restrictions or unsuitable connotations of the alternatives, such as „traditional philosophy" (used by many authors, e.g. Gbadegesin 1991, Rettová 2001), „indigenous philosophy" (e.g. Hallen 2000) or „sage philosophy" (Oruka 1990).

[8] Modern Afrophone literatures (literatures in African languages) are a perpetuation of the traditional intellectual discourse, they use the same words and operate within the same conceptual frame, they refer to proverbs, too, and they bend traditional wisdom according to the conditions and requirements of the present day. Specifically concerning foreign influences, literatures using European languages will always have an intercultural slant, a more or less pronounced necessity to translate between different conceptual schemes and different cultural contexts. But it is in Afrophone literatures that foreign ideas are introduced into the local intellectual environment and evaluated against the background of the context of the local culture.

Naturally, there is more to Afrophone literatures than their philosophical side, such as their artistic qualities in the case of fiction or their contributions to other disciplines (history, ethnography, literary theory etc.) in the case of non-fiction works. Afrophone literatures are Afrophone philosophies in so far as they reflect and develop philosophical contents and thus contribute to a philosophical debate.

[9] As my colleague from Angola, Leonardo Teca, who teaches Lingala at Prague, intends to explain in his dissertation, the so-called Zairean music, which is popular music with lyrics in Lingala, played at discos, is the medium where the singers express their religious and philosophical ideas and argue against one another in their compositions (information based on personal communication with Leonardo Teca). This phenomenon is certainly not unique for the Zairean music. Ezra Chitando points at a similar phenomenon within Zimbabwean gospel songs (see Liot 2002).

[10] See for example Kresse 1999, Kresse & Wiredu 2000, Wiredu 1996, Ngugi 1986.

[11] This article is part of a broader project, which I am developing in my Ph.D. thesis. There, more information on the theoretical grounding of the concept of „Afrophone philosophies" as well as more ventures into specific Afrophone discourses will be offered, in the three case studies (apart from a study of Swahili literature, there will be a study concentrating on the corpus of divination poetry of the Yoruba deity Ifa and a study of the theoretical writing of the Zimbabwean Ndebele; concerning Ndebele literature, see also Rettová 2004b). Some of my remarks on „Afrophone philosophies" in the article anticipate this broader context.

1.3. African philosophy and Afrophone philosophies

African philosophy is the general discourse which has the advantages of interculturality and interdisciplinarity. However, if it remains in its abstraction, it runs the risk of sterility. Afrophone philosophies are the intellectual discourses which are alive within their societies. Nevertheless, they may find it useful to broaden their horizons drawing on the general discipline (as is indeed many times the case). It is my belief that a dialogue between African philosophy and Afrophone philosophies is and will continue to be fruitful.[12]

2. Philosophical influences in Kezilahabi's late novellas

2.1. The reflexion of philosophical influences in Kezilahabi's late works

There are many explicit and even more subtle and hidden references to Western as well as African philosophical streams in the novellas[13] of Euphrase Kezilahabi, *Nagona* (1990) and *Mzingile* (1991). In this second part, I would like to clarify some of them.

I will concentrate more on the discussion with Western philosophy here. In the case of foreign traditions, a literary reflexion is not a mere linguistic translation, but rather their creative appropriation within another cultural context. Kezilahabi's way of incorporating Western philosophical influences in his narratives and accommodating them within the Swahili language and its conceptual frame is very instructive. The two works are a critique of several concepts or even fundamental conceptual schemes of Western philosophy and they contain original philosophical arguments.

In view of the emphasis laid in philosophy on the fact that thinkers be individuals and that the names of these individuals be rigorously cited (Oruka 1990), there could occur one problem in treating fiction within the discipline of philosophy, and that is the question of authorship: whose opinion is the opinion voiced by this or that literary character? How are we to quote that opinion, say, in a theoretical philosophical treatise? Although it is possible to disentangle this issue to some extent by going into Kezilahabi's theoretical works, especially his doctoral dissertation, *African Philosophy and the Problem of Literary Interpretation*, I would like to avoid claiming this and that is *Kezilahabi's* opinion. That is not the point.

As with Plato's dialogues, where there are various characters voicing different opinions, so are philosophical ideas in fictional works expressed in dialogues or in forms relativized by the

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[12] Indeed, as the terms „African philosophy" and „Afrophone philosophies" refer to discourses, not to persons, this dialogue can take place within the work of a single author, who then participates in different discourses, writes for different publics and effectively mediates between these discourses.

[13] Concerning the genre of the two works, see Bertoncini 2001, Gromov 1998, Khamis 1999, Khamis 2003. If I have opted for the term „novella", it is not meant to contribute to this discussion.

author's "poetic licence" and irony. It is perhaps more important that specific philosophical concepts or conceptual contrasts get introduced into a discourse and that they become part of the intellectual landscape of the participants in this discourse than that the origin and history of these concepts are known to them. The problem of authorship can then easily be solved by a bit more complicated quotation, referring to the conditions and, if necessary, the modality (the measure of irony) of the specific philosophical utterances.

Therefore, where I refer to Kezilahabi's dissertation, it is for purposes of understanding his conceptualization of the problems, not to pin down his opinions in his fictional works.

I will discuss the following topics in my paper: the "philosophies of origin" and the issue of metaphysics, the criticism of Western epistemology and Freudian psychoanalysis.

2.1.1. The philosophies of origins

The question of "origins" is introduced in *Mzingile* during the astonishing encounter of the main character ("mimi"[14]) with the lizard-eating scientist. The scientist presents his ideas in a dialogue with the main character. It may be useful to quote this passage at length.

> [Mwanasayansi:] "Binadamu, kama angekuwa anatumia muda wake kuwaza na kufanya majaribio mengi, angekuwa amekwisha kishinda kifo. Angekuwa amekwisha pata mbinu za kujiumba mwenyewe kwa utashi wake mwenyewe, au kuumba binadamu wengine mwenye maabara. Tunashindwa nini kugundua mchanganyiko wa chembe hai? **Wazo la kuwako kwa chanzo cha mambo limetupumbaza kwa muda wa karne nyingi, nalo wazo la ajali halikutusaidia kutatua kitendawili.** Tazama kwa mfano, nani amesema kwamba mapafu kazi yake ni kuvuta hewa na hayawezi kuvuta kitu kingine? Nani amesema kwamba kazi ya moyo ni kusukuma damu na hauwezi kusukuma kitu kingine? Tungetumia muda **kujifunza jinsi mwili wa sisimizi unavyofanya kazi** tungeweza kumpunguzia binadamu udhia mwingi na labda hata kumpunguzia uzito alio nao, ulazima wa kujenga maghorofa makubwa na kutengeneza vitanda. Ndege tunawaona lakini tunaendelea kuwabebesha wanawake watoto tumboni mwao kwa muda wa miezi tisa. **Neno maumbile limetupumbaza.**"

> [Mhusika mkuu:] "Mawazo yako mazuri, lakini kidogo nina wasiwasi na wazo la kuingiliana na kuvuruga mpango maalumu wa maumbile."

> "Hiyo ndiyo maana halisi ya sayansi. Sayansi haichunguzi tu maumbile kama yalivyo na kuyaacha kama yalivyo. Kutokana na maumbile tuliyo nayo tunaweza kujaribisha maumbile mapya."

> "Lakini maumbile yanabaki yaleyale."

> "La! Maumbile huweza kubadilika kabisa." Alinizungusha humo akinionyesha samaki wa jangwani ambao alikuwa akiwatumia kujaribishia vidonge vyake. Alinionyesha samaki wa jangwani ambao walikuwa hawajalazimika kula kwa muda wa wiki moja.

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[14] Since Gromov's 1998 article, many critics have adopted his terminology and interpretation. The word „mimi" is too suggestive of an identical, intact subject. Therefore, I will try to stick to a more neutral terminology in my paper.

"Nimeanza kuwa na matumaini."

"Nimependezewa na majaribio yako. **Lakini msingi wa falsafa yako unaturudisha nyuma tulikotoka.**"

"Kwa vipi?"

"**Kuna imani ya kuwa binadamu ndiye kitovu cha maumbile yote, na kwamba kila kitu ni kwa ajili ya matumizi yake.** Hii ndiyo hatari ya sayansi ifuatayo mkondo huu. Inamwongoza binadamu katika kujiona. Chochote agunduacho sharti kifuatiwe na jinsi gani binadamu angeweza kukitumia kwa manufaa yake. Nina wasiwasi na falsafa yoyote inayojaribu kufanya sayansi na teknolojia vitawale ku-wako kwa binadamu na mwishowe kuwa kitovu cha fikra. Sayansi na teknolojia havi-fikiri."

"Binadamu anao uwezo wa kuzunguka kwenye mhimili wake mwenyewe. Asinge-kuwa na uwezo huu angekuwa hatarini kutoweka kabisa kutoka kwenye sura ya dunia kama ilivyotokea kwa wanyama wengine. Juhudi zangu zaelekea katika kumhakiki-shia binadamu kwamba atabaki milele katika sura ya dunia. Mawazo yako kidogo yanafanana na yangu." (Kezilahabi 1991: 50-51, emphasis added)

[Scientist:] "If man used his time to think and to make a lot of experiments, he would have already conquered death. He would have found the method of creating himself at his own will or of creating another human being in a laboratory. Why do we fail to discover the composition of the living cell? ***The thought of the existence of an origin of things has dumbfounded us for the time of many centuries and the thought of accident has not helped us to solve the riddle.*** *Look, for example, who has said that the function of the lungs is to draw in air and that they cannot draw in something else? Who has said that the function of the heart is to push blood and that it cannot push something else? If we used the time* ***to learn about the way the body of an ant functions,*** *we could diminish many of man's troubles and perhaps even diminish his weight, the necessity to build huge storey houses and to produce beds. We see the birds, but we go on forcing women to carry the babies in their bellies for the time of nine months.* ***The word nature has dumbfounded us.***"

[Main character:] "Your thoughts are nice, but I have some doubts about that thought of going into and disturbing the specific ordering of nature."

"That is the very meaning of science. Science does not only investigate nature as it is and leave it as it is. In accordance with our nature we can attempt a new nature."

"But nature remains the same."

"Not at all! Nature can change completely." He took me around there and he showed me desert fish that he was using to test his pills. He showed me desert fish that had not had to eat for a week.

"I have begun to feel hope."

"I like your experiments. ***But the foundations of your philosophy throw us back where we came from.***"

"How?"

*"**There is the belief that man is the centre of all nature and that everything is for his sake and at his disposal.** That is the danger of the science that follows this ten-dency. It leads man to pride. Whatever he discovers must go hand in hand with a way*

> *how man can use it to his own benefit. I am doubtful about any philosophy that tries to make science and technology rule over man's being and eventually be the centre of thought. Science and technology do not think."*
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> *"Man has the capacity to turn around his own axis. If he did not have this capacity, he would be in danger of disappearing completely from the face of the world, as it happened to other animals. My efforts aim at assuring that man remains for ever on the face of the world. Your thoughts are a little similar to mine." (My translation, emphasis added.)*

This dialogue introduces the conceptual distinction between a thought looking for the origin of things and a thought investigating into their functioning. Thinking of the origins is metaphysical thinking: the origin determines the essence of things and the essence exercises a causal influence on the things. Instrumental rationality, whose prototype the scientist is, is thought free of metaphysics. It does not investigate into the ultimate cause of things, but rather it is pragmatically oriented at manipulating them.[15]

The metaphysical thought of the origin permeated Western philosophy since its beginnings in the natural philosophy of the Pre-Socratics until the late 19th century. In the theory of evolution, it experienced a slight modification in the idea of accident as the mechanism of evolution (referred to in the quote above). However, the issue of metaphysics has its repercussions until today and in various contexts.

A very troubling instance of metaphysical thought directly concerns the issue of the nature of present-day African philosophy. As Kezilahabi writes in the concluding part of his dissertation, called "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. (Kezilahabi 1985: 357-358)

Here, Kezilahabi transplants the criticism of the question of the origins and of metaphysics in general into the historical context of the hypothesis of the origin of African civilization in Egypt. The "stolen legacy theory", taking its name from a book by George G. M. James (1954), claims that the Egyptian civilization was Black African and that Greek philosophy was stolen from ancient Egypt. A version of this theory was propagated by the controversial Senegalese scholar

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[15] The title Wamitila 1991 gives to *Nagona* and *Mzingile* – „Kezilahabi's Metaphysics" –, applying a somewhat vague concept of „metaphysics" as „something beyond the physical world, something yonder" (Wamitila 1991: 62), is rather unfortunate, in view of the complex meaning of „metaphysics" in Kezilahabi (see also Kezilahabi 1985, especially Chapter V). Wamitila holds on to this simplistic concept of the metaphysical also in his other articles on *Nagona* and *Mzingile*, where he includes a reference to „the metaphysical" as the opposite of the physical (Wamitila 1998: 90) or characterizes the metaphysical as „the absurd of life" (Wamitila 1997: 23).

Cheikh Anta Diop, other versions became known under the label of "Afrocentrism" (see Crawford 1995).

In rejecting the question of the origin of African civilization, Kezilahabi rejects also the search for an ancient African philosophy as a viable philosophy for today's Africa. In this, he sides with the Cameroonian philosopher Marcien Towa, who wrote:

> Amener au jour une authentique philosophie négro-africaine établirait à coup sûr que nos ancêtres ont philosophé, sans pour autant nous dispenser, nous, de philosopher à notre tour. Déterrer une philosophie, ce n'est pas encore philosopher. [...] La philosophie ne commence qu'avec la décision de soumettre l'héritage philosophique et culturel à une critique sans complaisance. (Towa 1971a: 29-30)

> *To uncover an authentic Black African philosophy would establish with certainty that our ancestors have philosophized, without exempting us from the obligation to philosophize ourselves. To exhume a philosophy is not yet to philosophize. [...] Philosophy only starts with the decision to subject the philosophical and cultural heritage to an unmerciful critique.* (My translation.)

Towa's solution to Africa's philosophical dilemma resembles that of the scientist. Towa advocates the "mastering of the 'secret' of the West" (Towa 1971a: 40), which enabled the West to dominate Africa in the past, and he identifies this "secret" with science and technology. Like the scientist, Towa wants to disclose and assimilate the knowledge of the functioning of nature.

But is this, the denial of metaphysics and the consequent adherence to science and technology really the right way? In *Mzingile*, after the main character and the scientist return home from the laboratory, there follows a passage which sheds some light on this issue:

> Baada ya hapo tulikuwa na majadiliano makali kuhusu umuhimu wa vurumai katika fikra, na ulazima wa kuvunja uhusiano uliopo kati ya Mtu na Kitu. (Kezilahabi 1991: 52)

> *After that we had severe discussions concerning the importance of chaos in thought and the need to break the relationship that there is between Man and Thing.* (My translation.)

The fact that the two had "severe discussions" on these issues indicates their opinions were different. We can conjecture at the position of the main character from his opposition to the scientist in the above dialogue on the origin. On the first reading, the main character seems to oppose the scientist from a conservative position, he seems to speak for the preservation of a respect to nature, which was based on the metaphysics of origin. But what about the objection that "the foundations of [the scientist's] philosophy throw us back where we came from"? If the main character's position were really a conservative one, advocating a return to metaphysics, this being thrown back would then be a desirable state.

In fact, what the main character may mean is that the scientist is not radical enough in his criticism of the metaphysical reference to the origin. He still dwells in the Enlightenment ideal of

man as the master of nature and preserves the conceptual distinction between "Mtu na Kitu", which, according to the main character, must be done away with. This brings us directly to our next topic.

2.1.2. The criticism of Western epistemology

The second topic concerns both a major philosophical theme and an equally significant criticism of it. The main character discusses the language people will use in the "new world" (Mezger 2002) to come after the destruction of the old world order in a dialogue with the woman with a shining body:

> "Sasa nafikiri yafaa tuanzishe lugha mpya," nilitoa wazo.

> "Nami pia nimekuwa nikifikiria wazo hilo. Tutahitaji lugha ambayo haina cha Mtu na Kitu."

> "Yafaa pia lugha hiyo isiwe na maneno kama 'nyuklia' au 'vita'. Tutaunda lugha ambayo msingi wake ni kuwako." (Kezilahabi 1991: 69)

> *"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."* (My translation.)

In the translation, I have rendered "Mtu" as "Man" and "Kitu" as "Thing", as one would expect. However, the words in the original are written in capital letters and this indicates that they are not to be taken in their habitual meanings. When I read this passage, it came to my mind that Kezilahabi might be rendering here the Western pair of concepts, "subject" and "object", the knowing and the known, into Swahili.

Still, I was afraid to rush at this conclusion. The relationships between "Mtu" and "subject" and "Kitu" and "object" are a little distant, and besides, it was not clear to me what the meaning of "kuwako" in this passage was and what the relationship between the subject-object dichotomy, as I knew it, and "kuwako" could be. "Kuwako" can be translated as "existence" or "being", and both of these words have a myriad of meanings in those philosophies that deal with the subject-object problematic.

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.

Onto-criticism then requires another kind of language. The onto-critic must "let truth be by privileging the silent language of Being." (Kezilahabi 1985: 2).[16] This language distinguishes onto-criticism from techno-criticism: "The 'language' of theory is grounded in *techné*, the language of thinking in Being." (Kezilahabi 1985:219)

The fundamental conceptual contrast is then between ontology and epistemology. Epistemology here means the subject-object dichotomy, the splitting of reality into the knowing subject and the known object. This dichotomy accompanies Western philosophy since its beginnings, but a more influential elaboration of the problem is the result of the age of Enlightenment. It was René Descartes who isolated the subjective sphere. The take-off of his argument is interestingly summarized in William E. Mkufya's epic novel, *Ziraili na Zirani*:

> Katika karne ya kumi na sita kuelekea ya kumi na saba alitokea Mfaransa mmoja aliyeitwa Rene. Alikuwa mtu aliyefahamu mambo mengi. Siku moja alianzisha mfumo wake wa kufikiri akasema: "Kwa chochote nitakachoambiwa, nitasita kukiamini kwanza, kisha nitakichambua mpaka nipate uhakika. Kama nitashindwa kukihakikisha basi heri nibakie kwenye shaka kuliko kukiamini." (Mkufya 1999: 72-73)
>
> *At the turn of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, there came a Frenchman called René. He was a man who knew a lot. One day he founded his thought system and he said: "In anything that I will be told, I will hesitate to believe it at first, then I will analyze it until I get certainty. If I fail to confirm it, then it is better that I remain in doubt rather than believe it."* (My translation.)

The certainty that Descartes found was in the sentence: "I think." This sentence cannot be untrue, because even if I am mistaken in the contents of my thought, it is still true that I think any time I think: "I think." That which thinks cannot be nothing, and so Descartes concludes: "I think, therefore I am." And then he goes on to equate: I am a thinking substance, a mind, a soul. But I only have the evidence of thinking for me, in thinking "I think". The rest of the world, including my body and other people's minds and bodies, is only given to me through representations, and the truthfulness of my cognitive capacities is guaranteed by the goodness of God. His existence is evident to me from the presence of His idea in my mind, an idea of perfection that I, as an imperfect being, cannot be the cause of.[17]

The problem of the subject-object dichotomy became a major issue in European philosophy after Descartes and it culminated in the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl (see especially Husserl 1993, Husserl 1952). Husserl also touched on topics in his works, unfortunately largely not published during his lifetime, which made the subject-object dichotomy problematic. These topics were developed by his disciples.

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[16] Note also the reference to „silence" here. Silence is in Kezilahabi not (only) negatively connotated, but rather it „is the one thing that lets truth appear" (Kezilahabi 1985: 2). This might be of relevance concerning an analysis of the opening passages of *Nagona* (cf. Khamis 1999: 13, Khamis 2003: 84f.).

[17] See Descartes 1977, Descartes 1969, Oksenberg Rorty 1982, Williams 1990.

Martin Heidegger, an influential thinker of the 20th century, launched a profound analysis of what it actually means to be a human being in the world. The pure Cartesian subject, understood as a primary reality, becomes untenable (cf. Heidegger 1993: 45-46) and so does the concept of knowledge corresponding to the subject-object model. Knowledge is no relationship or influence between the subject and the object, but rather, "Erkennen ist ein im In-der-Welt-sein fundierter Modus des Daseins" (Heidegger 1993: 62), that is, it is a mode of being of humans which is based on their "being in the world". "'Being in the world' is a disclosing of the sphere of things prior to any objective knowledge and taking place in ways different from "pure knowledge". Thus the human being *already knows* before it can aim its cognitive capacities at "objects" and the act of objectifying is inevitably determined by that preceding disclosure of things from the situation of "being in the world".

The subject-object epistemological scheme was also challenged from the side of African philosophy in the second half of the 20th century. Perhaps the best-known is Senghor's theory of "dancing the Other". Senghor writes:

> "I think, therefore I am," wrote Descartes, who was the European *par excellence*. The African negro could say, "I feel, I dance the Other, I am." [...] He has no need to think, but to live the Other by dancing it. [...] Now to dance is to discover and to *re-create*, to identify oneself with the forces of life, to lead a fuller life, and in short, to *be*. It is, at any rate, the highest form of knowledge. And thus, the knowledge of the African negro is, at the same time, discovery and creation – re-creation. (Senghor 1995: 120)

Senghor develops a theory of knowledge by emotion and of the black reason that is "intuitive by participation" (Senghor 1995: 120; also Senghor 1971: 289). Senghor was much criticized, often for reasons that are political rather than theoretical – namely for his obsequious attitude to colonialism.[18]

But going back in the history of Western philosophy, there were critics who caused the gradual crumbling of the Cartesian subject before Heidegger. Next to Copernicus and Darwin, who displaced man from the centre respectively of the cosmos and of the creation, the frontal attack at the free and autonomous subject was undertaken by Marx and Freud. This line of intellectual development is sketched out in the scene of the *Ngoma Kuu*, the final feast, in *Nagona*.

2.1.3. Freudian psychoanalysis in the history of philosophy

During the final feast, *Ngoma Kuu* ("Great Dance", or "Great Dance Performance"), there are four groups that were chosen to show their dances in the middle of the circle. These dances, as Kezilahabi writes, "[…] were dances that were famous at some time during the course of history"

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[18] The literature on Senghor is immense, but one rather representative critique is in Towa 1971b.

(Kezilahabi 1990: 57, my translation). The titles of the songs that these groups dance to, except for the fourth group, are names of philosophical books or theories of major figures in the history of Western scholarship.

These thinkers are portrayed as the leaders of the groups. They are not mentioned by name in the text, but the first one appears to be the philosopher Aristotle, the second one the psychologist Freud and the third one the revolutionary Marx (or possibly another Marxist). The fourth group is the group of madmen, the group whose chaotic dance in the end overrides the whole feast.

The dancing parade is then an allegory of the history of philosophy. The first philosopher, Aristotle, is the founding father of Western rationalism. He gave Western philosophy its systematic form and he determined its conceptual frame for centuries to come.

The other two thinkers are two major critics of this rationalist scheme. They are the ones who undermined its pillar – the autonomous and free human being, having at its disposal a consciousness that mirrors truly the external world –, by denuding factors that determined the human being to such a degree that very little remained from its autonomy and relationship to truth. A new approach to these notions became necessary.

These thinkers exposed two forms of determining factors that both transcend the human consciousness. In Marx' case, it was the economic and material factors: man is not free, his thought is only a function of his material and economic existence. And Freud prepared a frontal attack to human freedom and integrity by laying bare the determination of consciousness by instincts, especially the sexual drive.[19]

The fourth group points in the direction of African philosophy. This is also close to how Khamis (2003: 82; see also Khamis 1999: 14) understands it:

> A revolution is tacitly hinted at towards the end of the novel, where the author symbolically asserts that in order to re-discover and find their 'identity', Africans must dance in their own style, however haphazard, probing and painful it may be. It is only through this that the world will reciprocate and recognize them favourably.

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[19] A major critic of this tendency of transcendent explanations and of the underlying reductionism was the Viennese psychologist Viktor E. Frankl. Transcendent explanations are such that explain away mental contents using a theory that postulates a reality of some kind operating behind them and disregard the arguments propounded by these mental contents as mere manifestations of the reality postulated by the theory. Frankl criticized mainly psychologists, especially Freudians and Adlerians, but his reasoning is a valid criticism of all kinds of transcendent philosophical arguments, such as the Marxist theory of the possibility to reduce thought to its material conditions.

According to Frankl, it is not incorrect to reduce a complex reality to a simpler one for purposes of study, just as during the projection of a three-dimensional object on a screen, we make two-dimensional representations of it, so a conical object appears as a triangle or as a circle. Where the reduction becomes wrong is where it turns into reductionism by saying the studied object is „nothing but" the simpler reality that we have reduced it to: „mental contents are *nothing but* the manifestation of the libido", „mental contents are *nothing but* the manifestation of matter" etc. To counter these reductionist trends, Frankl introduced in his „logotherapy" such concepts as „immanent criticism" of the patient's opinions, that is, the need to discuss the patient's problems based on the patient's own understanding of them (see Frankl 1994).

Chaos brings destruction to the others' dances – a thought that reverberates in Kezilahabi's dissertation, where he emphasizes the need "to take a destructive rather than a deconstructive stand vis-à-vis the Western philosophy of value and representation" (Kezilahabi 1985: 4). It serves as liberation towards a new goal. During the chaotic dance, the main character experiences inspiration and he is – symbolically – given a bow and one arrow (Kezilahabi 1990: 60).

I will come back to the perspective that this act of liberation offers at the end of the next section. Here, I would like to deal with the references to Freud's theory in more detail.

The Freudian parade in *Nagona* is described in the following words:

> Kikundi cha pili kuingia kiliongozwa na mwanasaikolojia mashuhuri. Alikuwa na sharubu na alivaa miwani. Wafuasi wake walicheza kama watu ambao bado wamo ndotoni. Kikundi chake kiliimba nyimbo ziitwazo *'Totem', 'Oedipus Complex'* na *'Neurosis'*. Wakati wao wa kuonyesha malimboto[20] ulipofika wagonjwa wamelazwa vitandani wakiota ndoto; wengine walibweka kama mbwa ndotoni. Watazamaji hawakupendezwa sana na baadhi ya maneno ya kimatusitusi yaliyotumiwa katika nyimbo. Watazamaji waliwatupia mawe. (Kezilahabi 1990: 58)

> *The second group to enter was led by a famous psychologist. He had a moustache and he wore glasses. His followers danced like people who are still in dreams. His group sang songs that were called 'Totem', 'Oedipus Complex' and 'Neurosis'. When their time to show masterpiece tricks came, the sick were placed in beds dreaming; others barked in dreams like dogs. The audience were not pleased much by some of the rude words used in the songs. The audience threw stones at them.* (My translation.)

The "songs" mentioned in the passage refer to Freud's major theories, his explanation of the taboos connected with totemic animals, the concept of the Oedipus complex, an incestuous longing of a male child for his mother and enmity against his father, and the key concept of neurosis as a psychological disorder caused by suppressed mental contents, usually of sexual nature. Freud saw dreams as a way of making manifest these unconscious contents and he developed a theory of dream interpretation. The access to the unconscious of man is thus indirect, through manifestations that escape conscious control, such as dreams, "slips of the tongue" and other mistakes, and hypnosis.

On the other hand, the conscious sphere is the source of mere "rationalizations" of the manifestations of the unconscious, that is, of false explanations that serve to obscure the real nature of the problems, which lies in a socially tabooed sphere: in sexuality. Freud became

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[20] „*[A]maleba* or *amalimboto* [...] are mysterious or supernatural shows of new and unfamiliar technology which may or may not be associated with witchcraft. Sometimes they are tricks bordering on conjuring, and sometimes they are daring acts which a person would not do under normal circumstances." (Kezilahabi 2000: 191-192). These „happenings" (ibidem: 191) take place during the major climax of a dance performance in the Bakerebe society. I am thankful to Professor Kezilahabi for referring me to this article.

famous for interpreting even works of art and the greatest achievements of the intellect as "sublimations" of the sexual drive – as socially acceptable outlets of it.[21]

Freud's theory thus not only sidestepped the conscious subject, but it also devalued its conscious contents as manifestations of another, unconscious psychical reality, which was of instinctive, animal-like nature. Between the two conflicting spheres – the instinctive desires and the restricting social requirements –, the human soul becomes a battlefield where these influences are constantly balanced out, sometimes more successfully, resulting in acknowledging the situation and accepting a compromise, sometimes less successfully, resulting in a neurotic adaptation that brings much suffering to the patient. Thus even in the sphere of action, there is no "freedom" or "self-determination", there is only "health" as a balance of powers.

In his later works, Freud expressed these tensions of the human soul using the triad of concepts, Ego, Id and Superego.

2.1.4. Ego, Id and Superego

The opening paragraph of Chapter IV of *Nagona* reads:

> Tulikuwa watatu, EGO, ID na SUPEREGO. Tulikuwa watatu katika mmoja na sauti yetu ilikuwa moja. (Kezilahabi 1990: 18)
>
> *We were three, EGO, ID and SUPEREGO. We were three in one and our voice was one.* (My translation.)

The three terms, Ego, Id and Superego, refer to the second of Freud's structural models of human psyche, which he introduced in 1923 to replace the earlier model of the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious. The Ego is the rational and conscious component of the soul, it controls what goes on in the consciousness and it also effectuates the suppression of not allowed mental contents. The Id is the source of the energy of the psyche. It is unknown and unconscious, it contains passions. To express the relationship between the Ego and the Id, Freud uses the metaphor of a rider on a horse – the rider controls and directs the energies of the horse, he decides where they will go, but the force comes from the beast (Freud 1989: 109).

The Superego is the moral ideal of the Ego. It arises during the time when the child struggles with the Oedipus complex, that is, when he is forced the overcome his incestuous desire for his mother and his enmity against his father. The child is forced to suppress these feelings, and instead, he builds up an idealized image of his father within his soul. This is then the Superego.

Kezilahabi breaks down the main character into these three parts and, quite consequently, he goes on writing in the plural when referring to the main character:

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[21] This succinct summary of Freud's theory relies on Freud 1989, Freud 1991.

> Kwa wakati huu serikali ilikuwa imetupa kazi ngumu ambayo tulihisi ingetufungulia njia mpya za kufikiri na kutatua matatizo ulimwenguni. (Kezilahabi 1990: 18)

> *At this time, the government had given us a difficult task that we felt would open us new ways of thinking and solve the problems in the world.* (My translation.)

A few lines further, an introspection of the memory and a self-observation of the main character is described:

> Ni sisi hapa.

> Hakuna hata mmoja kati yetu akumbukaye jinsi tulivyofika hapa. Sote tunakumbuka kidogo tu kwamba serikali ilitupa ndege kwa ajili ya usafiri. Tunakumbuka jinsi tulivyoambiwa kujifunga mikanda kwa sababu hali ya hewa ilikuwa mbaya. Tuliweza bado kutambuana ingawa sura zetu zilikuwa zimebadilika kidogo. Tupo hapa. (Kezilahabi 1990: 18)

> *It is us here.*

> *There is no one among us who remembers how we got here. We all remember only a little that the government gave us a plane for the travel. We remember how we were told to fasten our belts because the weather was bad. We could still recognize one another, although our appearances had changed a bit. We are here.* (My translation.)

The narrative goes on in the first person plural throughout the fourth chapter. Kezilahabi concludes the chapter with another self-observation of the main character:

> Tulitazamana. Kizee kilikuwa kimetufunza jambo moja – kufikiri. Tulishangaa tulipojiona wazee wenye mvi. (Kezilahabi 1990: 23)

> *We looked at one another. The old man had taught us one thing – to think. We were amazed when we saw we were grey-haired old men.* (My translation.)

What is the meaning of this breaking down of the character into three and writing about him in the plural? One function is certainly the destruction of the subject as a unity.[22] This is in line with the issues dealt with so far: the overcoming of the subject-object dichotomy, the attack at the Cartesian subject and at the underlying metaphysics.

But there is another dimension – it is a call to a plurality of human beings. In that the whole chapter goes on in the first person plural, a sense of collective identification arises, not identification with an individual narrator, as in most of the other chapters. (It is the opposite procedure to that in Chapter VIII, where a single character confesses the sins of mankind.)

The chapter becomes an instruction in thinking, directed towards this collective recipient and interlocutor. The old man (*kizee*) constantly puts in doubt that which to the (tripled) main

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[22] Khamis 2003 very correctly points at the „fragmented selfhood" (Khamis 2003: 82f.) of the main character. The decomposition of the subject into the Freudian triad, Superego, Id and Ego, is a specific instance of this fragmentation. Nevertheless, Ego should not then be identified with „mimi himself" (Khamis 2003: 79).

character appears self-evident: that he is alive, that he is a human being, that he can think. The most striking example is when the old man comments on a dilapidated factory:

"Ila kiwanda hiki ninakisifu kwa jambo moja tu. Ndiyo maana nimewaonyesha kiwanda hiki kwanza."

"Jambo gani?"

"Kilikuwa kikitengeneza baiskeli ambazo hazikuwa na breki." Tulitazamana. Kizee kilikuwa kimeanza tena kutoeleweka.

"Baiskeli bila breki zawezaje kutembea?"

"Hapa hakuna haja ya visababisho. Breki za hapa ni utashi. Ninyi mnafikiria visababisho. Breki halisi ni utashi." Tulijaribu kumwelewa, lakini mara aliendelea.

"Mnajua! Baiskeli inasimama pale unapopataka wewe."

"Pamoja na huo utashi, baiskeli ambayo haina breki haitasimama pale unapopataka wewe."

"Pale itakaposimama ndipo ninapopataka."

"Ukigongwa na gari je! Ndipo hapo unapopataka?"

"Hiyo ni ajali. Katika bonde hili kuna imani kuwa ajali ni mwanzo tu wa kitu au wazo jipya.[...]" (Kezilahabi 1990: 22-23)

"But still, I praise this factory for just one thing. That is why I have shown this factory to you first."

"What thing?"

"It produced bicycles that had no brakes." We looked at one another. The old man had again begun to be incomprehensible.

"How can bicycles without brakes ride?"

"There is no need of causes here. The brakes of this place are will. You think of causes. Real brakes are will." We tried to understand him, but he immediately continued.

"You know! The bicycle stops where you want it."

"Despite that will, a bicycle that has no brakes will not stop where you want it."

"Where it stops, is where I want it."

"And if you get knocked down by a car! Is that where you want it?"

"That is accident. In this valley, there is the belief that accident is only a beginning of a new thing or thought. [...]" (My translation.)

In a state of decay and corruption, the old man praises the factory for what is apparently a defect – and what was perhaps a defect due to the negligence of the management or the workers of the factory. In a paradoxical turn, the old man interprets this defect as an original thought that helps interrogate the idea of causation.

This questioning of what is apparently self-evident is precisely the meaning of thinking. The paradoxical reversal of the usual order of things brings new insights, often more adequate to the way things actually are. Thus in the myth of King Oedipus, the old man reverses cause and effect:

> "Niliwambia ueni joka kuu litameza jua! Ueni *Sphinx!* Mtatatua fumbo la kitendawili. Lakini hawakunisikiliza!" (Kezilahabi 1990: 20)

> *"I told them, kill the monster, [or] it will swallow the sun! Kill the Sphinx! You will solve the mystery of the riddle. But they did not listen to me."* (My translation.)

Whereas in the myth itself, the Sphinx threw herself into an abyss after Oedipus solved the riddle, here, the order is reversed: the solving of the riddle is a consequence of killing the Sphinx.[23] So, could it be that perhaps there *was* no riddle at all, there was only the monster imposing the riddle-solving on people willing to fight with her following her rules?

But there is another aspect to the Sphinx' riddle, namely it is its answer. The riddle, mentioned by the 2nd century B.C. Greek historian Apollodorus in his *Library*, was:

> What is that which has one voice and yet becomes four-footed and two-footed and three-footed? (3.5.8)

And the answer is: man.[24] The answer, paradoxically, only confirms the claim that the riddle-solving was meaningless. It advises: forget (metaphysical) monsters, concentrate on man. The killing of the monster is synonymous with a decided pragmatic turn in thinking. This also harmonizes with Kezilahabi's emphatic call for an African philosophy that would truly account for Africa's situation, with its political, economic and social aspects (Kezilahabi 1985: e.g. 44ff.; 187ff.). That this turn in thinking is not the end, but rather the beginning of the task, is obvious.

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[23] The old man repeats the argument of Palaephatus, the 4th century B.C. author, who in his treatise *On Unbelievable Tales* wrote: „Why didn't the Thebans simply shoot the sphinx with arrows rather than stand by and see their fellow citizens devoured? Ridiculous!" (quoted from the excellent essay by Andrew Wilson, from: http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~loxias/sphinx.htm). Indeed, early vase paintings depict Oedipus killing the Sphinx with a sword or a spear. The riddle appears first in connection with Oedipus and the Sphinx in Sophocles' (c. 496-406 B.C.) tragedies *Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*, through which the story became famous. The appearance of the riddle is actually more of a riddle than the riddle itself, as the riddle itself is neither particularly original (see footnote 23 in this paper) nor particularly difficult. For more details, see http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~loxias/sphinx.htm.

[24] It is interesting to note the following: „Outside of Greece the riddle seems to be current in more or less similar forms among various peoples. Thus it is reported among the Mongols of the Selenga (R. G. Latham, *Descriptive Ethnology*, i.325), and in Gascony (J. F. Bladé, *Contes populaires de la Gascogne*, i.3-14). Further, it has been recently recorded, in a form precisely similar to the Greek, among the tribes of British Central Africa: the missionary who reports it makes no reference to the riddle of the Sphinx, of which he was apparently ignorant. See Donald Fraser, *Winning a primitive people,* London 1914, p. 171: „What is it that goes on four legs in the morning, on two at midday, and on three in the evening? Answer: A man, who crawls on hands and knees in childhood, walks erect when grown, and with the aid of a stick in his old age. „" (Quoted from Apollodorus' *Library,* Footnote 2. http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Aabo%3Atlg%2C0548%2C001&query= 3%3A5%3A8.). I have also found a reference to the riddle in the oral art of the Oromo (a large ethnic group in Ethiopia, called the Galla in old sources): „*Ganama luka afuriin, guyyaa luka lamaan, galgala luka sadiin deema.* 'He goes on four legs in the morning, on two legs during the day and on three legs in the evening.' The answer is: *daa'ima, gayeessa, jaarsa* 'a baby, a grown up man and an old man'." (Griefenow-Mewis & Bitima 2004: 86).

2.2. A short summary

My analysis of *Nagona* and *Mzingile* has been very fragmented, the excursions into the history of philosophy were short and the explanation of the philosophical context could be deeper and more detailed. Much has been left unsaid. Still, I believe that some of the main reference points have been established and that we could follow a few of the philosophical arguments presented in the two novellas. These arguments make up coherent philosophical positions, with many resonations in Western as well as in African philosophy and also with original philosophical insights and programmatic proposals.

3. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to elucidate the philosophical dimension of the late works of Euphrase Kezilahabi. This is done within the methodological frame of approaching literatures in African languages as one of the areas where philosophical reflexion takes place in present-day African societies. I have coined the term of "Afrophone philosophies" to refer to all of these discourses, including oral literatures, modern and classic written literatures, and other forms of intellectual discourse. They are categorized as belonging here according to the criterion of language and the criterion of the function of exercising the philosophical reflexion in the given African society, reflecting various influences affecting it. The influences of Western philosophy affect the Swahili-speaking societies without any doubt and Kezilahabi's novellas are a critical way of dealing with them. In them, he introduces, among others, Western philosophical issues into the specific cultural context of these societies by conceptualizing them in the Swahili language. He critically reflects them and proposes original solutions.

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