

## “THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS”? THE CREATION OF A WORLD IN WILLIAM E. MKUFYA’S *ZIRAILI NA ZIRANI*<sup>1</sup>

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Mwanafalsafa na mwanahisabati wa Kijerumani wa karne ya kumi na saba kuelekea ya kumi na nane, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, alisema kwamba dunia hii iliyombwa na Mungu ni “dunia bora zaidi katika dunia zinazowezezana”. Kutokana na Leibniz, kuna masharti machache ya kuumbwa kwa dunia yasiyo budi yatimizwe, halafu mambo mengineyo yanaongezeka yakichaguliwa na Mungu ili dunia anayoiumba iwe bora zaidi kuliko dunia nyingine ambazo pia zingeweza kuwapo. Dhana ya Leibniz ya “dunia zinazowezezana” inaendelea kutumiwa hadi siku hizi katika falsafa na hasa katika mantiki.

Makala haya yanachambua riwaya ya William E. Mkufya itwayo *Ziraili na Zirani* yakitumia dhana hii ya Leibniz. Katika riwaya ya Mkufya, malaika wanajaribu kuumba “dunia bora zaidi katika dunia zinazowezezana” kufuatana na masharti yaliyopo ya kitendo cha kuumba dunia. Sharti moja lililo muhimu zaidi ni kuwa dunia iwe na viumbe vilivyokabidhiwa hiari. Viumbe vilivyo na hiari ndivyo vinavyoweza kumtii na kumpenda Mungu. Riwaya ya William E. Mkufya inasimulia kuumbwa kwa dunia mojawapo ya dunia zinazowezezana na kuteketezwa kwake kwa sababu hiari iliyokabidhiwa watu haikulingana na udhaifu wa tabia yao. Lazima malaika wajandae tena waumbe dunia iliyo bora zaidi.

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### 1. Introduction: “The best of all possible worlds”?

The German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz<sup>2</sup>, maintained that this world that God created was the best of all possible worlds. This was guaranteed by three of God’s attributes of infinity: his infinite goodness, his infinite intelligence, and his infinite power (*Monadology* 48 & 55). If the world were not the best possible, then God would either be malevolent and create something evil out of his deliberation, or he would be too stupid to

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<sup>2</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) is a major exponent of rationalism in Europe, a philosophical trend whose foundation of truth is man’s capacity of reason alone. Apart from philosophy, Leibniz studied and was active in a number of disciplines, such as law, history, natural science, diplomacy, and especially mathematics. Independently of Isaac Newton, he devised a system of calculus.

Leibniz’s work is immense, but only a small part of it was published during his lifetime. After the exposition of his philosophy in *Theodicy* (1710), he summarized the gist of his thought in the treatise known as *Monadology* (written in French 1714; it was first published in a German translation by Heinrich Koehler in 1720; Koehler also added the title “*Monadologie*”, never used by Leibniz), where he elaborates his sophisticated ontological theory of monads as simple, immaterial substances. They are endowed with an immanent principle of action and synchronized with one another through pre-established harmony. This concept refers to the way God determined, during the act of creation, the monads’ functioning.

know what was good, or he would be too weak to create it. Obviously, all of these alternatives were absurd to the philosopher.

This claim brought Leibniz to the necessity to account for the evil that there is in the world. Leibniz's answer to this problem was that God created the world in the best way to include as much variety as possible with the greatest order possible (*Monadology* 58). In other words, if everything were from gold, gold would lose its value. Or as the famous story goes, the king who wished that everything he touched should turn into gold eventually died of hunger, because even the food he brought to his lips, turned into gold.<sup>3</sup>

But let us return to the concept of possible worlds, introduced by Leibniz. In Leibniz's view, God in his mind did the exercise of going through the infinite number of possible combinations of creating a world, and based on this examination, he chose the best one of these possible worlds which he then brought into being. God could have created a cold Sun, if he wished, and he could have created a world without humans. However, there were certain constraints on creation. As Leibniz puts it:

*Cependant, il ne faut point s'imaginer avec quelques-uns que les vérités éternelles, étant dépendantes de Dieu, sont arbitraires et dépendent de sa volonté, comme des Cartes paroist l'avoir pris et puis Monsieur Poiret. Cela n'est véritable que des vérités contingentes dont le principe est la convenance ou le choix du meilleur [...]. (Monadologie 46)*

We must not, however, imagine, as some do, that eternal truths, being dependent on God, are arbitrary and depend on His will, as Descartes, and afterwards M. Poiret, appear to have held. That is true only of contingent truths, of which the principle is fitness [convenance] or choice of the best [...]. (*Translation by Robert Latta*)

The eternal truths are, in Leibniz's understanding, the basic principles of logic. Thus in any of the possible worlds, these principles are valid. God could not have created a world that would contain a contradiction, for example, a world in which it is true that it rains and it does not rain at the same time in the same place.

As it is indicated in the quote, in this belief Leibniz opposed Descartes, who maintained that even the principles of logic were incumbent on God's decision, thus they were arbitrary and only true because of God's will. In Descartes' view, it was possible for God to create a world containing contradictions. The two philosophers' dispute concerned the issue of what it is that is necessary, as opposed to that which is arbitrary, in a created world. Against this background, I would now like to discuss William E. Mkufya's novel, *Ziraili na Zirani*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Following the principle of the plenum, the fullest world possible was created: "more things exist and/or more events actually take place in this world than in any other consistent set of interrelated monads" (Kemerling 2001). This defence notwithstanding, Leibniz got criticized severely for his dictum from the side of French Enlightenment philosophers, such as François Voltaire, who ridiculed Leibniz's philosophy in his *Candide* as Stoic resignation and acceptance of the evil in the world.

<sup>4</sup> The author, William E. Mkufya, was born in Lushoto in Tanga in 1953. He started his writing career with two novels written in English, *The Wicked Walk* (1977) and *The Dilemma* (1982). After *Ziraili na Zirani* (Azrael and Zirani, 1999), he published another novel, *Ua la Faraja* (The Flower of Consolation, 2004), where he tackles the

## 2. William E. Mkufya's *Ziraili na Zirani*

### 2.1. The novel

The main character of the novel is Fikirini Zirani<sup>5</sup>, an African teacher, who, face to face Africa's economic and social problems, turns away from the two religions of his parents, Islam and Christianity, and embraces a form of materialism including elements of traditional African philosophy and religions (Mkufya 1999: 35).

Zirani dies prematurely in the war of two neighbouring countries, Porojoro and Bloblaha. His soul escapes the angel of Death, Azrael, and is whisked to the camp of devils by Lucifer. There he is exposed to an instruction that should equip him better for provoking a rebellion against heaven after he arrives in hell. He is informed of the contention that there is between God and Lucifer concerning the quality of the created being and he is especially enlightened about the role of Lucifer and the other devils to tempt the created being endowed with free will in order that they prove that it is imperfect. The gist of this instruction is the argument that man's free will is incompatible with the imperfections of his body and its passions, with the limitations of his reason and the deficiency of the environment in which reason should develop.

After this period, Zirani's soul is let free again to be captured by Azrael and sent to the judgement and eventually to hell. In hell, it is saved from torture by members of the *kambi ya Dhahara* (the Camp of the Manifesto)<sup>6</sup>. The Camp of the Manifesto is an organization established by materialist thinkers to fight against heaven. Zirani is subjected to another training in the Camp of the Manifesto, this time a hard-core communist ideology which denies the existence itself of the spiritual realm. It professes that the only reality is of material nature, accessible to man's senses and understanding (Mkufya 1999: 68).

This subsequent instruction largely suppresses the insights that Zirani obtained among the devils. Whenever he is troubled by uncertainty, the Camp's *apparatchiks* do not delay to dispell his doubts, brushing aside the idea itself of devils as an invention of the ruling classes (Mkufya 1999: 83ff). As it will show, the devils' teaching was in fact superior to this indoctrination in the Camp of the Manifesto. It reflected more accurately the way things were. The fact that Zirani discarded the devils' instruction led to the final tragedy of his becoming an instrument of the rebellion against God. Against his own better judgement, Zirani sets the blow to sever God's throne, and instantly, the world is destroyed.

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complex issue of AIDS in Africa (cf. Bertoncini-Zúbková 2005 in this volume). Mkufya is also the author of poems and of children's books. According to the information on the cover of *Ziraili na Zirani*, he is currently working on an English version of the novel under the title of *Pilgrims From Hell*.

<sup>5</sup> The name is, literally, an imperative in the plural, meaning 'think (and) reject/abstain'.

<sup>6</sup> My suggestion is to translate *kambi ya Dhahara* as 'the Camp of the Manifesto'. The word 'Manifesto' captures both the etymological reference of *Dhahara* to *dhahiri* ('evident, manifest') or *kudhihiri* ('to be/become evident, manifest') and the revolutionary orientation of the Camp, in that 'Manifesto' alludes to the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels from 1848. Cf. also footnote 10 on the concept of *udhahiri*.

## 2.2. The necessary and the arbitrary in creating a world

The end of the novel is revealing. At the end of the world, the hell-dwellers, who had instigated the rebellion against heaven and perpetrated it with the help of devils, witness a shocking scene:

(1) *Walishangaa walipoona ukuta mkubwa unawatenganisha wao na malaika wa mbingu wote. Wakashituka kwa mshangao mkuu walipoona Lusifa na shetani wengine wanarukia upande wa pili wa ukuta na kuunganika na malaika wa mbingu huku wakishikana mikono na kuonyesha nyuso za furaha kama wachezaji wa timu mbili za kandanda baada ya kipenga cha mwisho.* (Mkufya 1999: 225)

They were surprised when they saw a big wall separating them from all the angels of heaven. They were extremely shocked when they saw Lucifer and the other devils jumping over to the other side of the wall and joining the angels of heaven, shaking hands and showing happiness in their faces like players of two football teams after the last whistle.

Creation turns out being a game played by angels and devils. As the world is being destroyed, angels and devils jointly watch the scene, discussing the shortcomings of the past world and the properties of the next world that they are about to create. We find out that many of the qualities of the past world were arbitrary. For example, the element from which the creatures are molded need not be “soil”. The next created beings will be created from light:

(2) [Mikaili:] “*Tutawaumba kwa mianga ya rangi mbalimbali.*” (Mkufya 1999: 228).

[Michael:] “We shall create them from rays of light of various colours.”

Due to this, the quality of created beings will not be measured by succumbing to bodily desire, as sin will not be defined as a failure of free will to control passion:<sup>7</sup>

(3) [Mikaili:] “*Umbile la msimu huu halitapimwa kwa kutumia dhambi ya hiari na tamaa za mwili. Tutawaumba kwa mwanga sio udongo utotao na kuwa tope.*” (Mkufya 1999: 230)

[Michael:] “The natural being of this period will not be measured by sin of free will and desires of the body. We shall create them from light, not from soil that gets wet and turns into mud.”

Natural evolution can also progress differently:

(4) [Mikaili:] “*[K]azi ni kutekeleza kauli kuu. Kuanzisha umbile lenye utambuzi mpya na kulitafutia sayari ya kulipandikiza. Safari hii tusiwe na pupa ya kushusha utambuzi, tuache umbile lipevuke taratibu hadi kukomaa kufikia umri wa kufumbukiwa. Tulifanya makosa mtu kumpa hiari mapema.*” (Mkufya 1999: 228)

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<sup>7</sup> This is what sin meant in the case of people: “Dhambi hutokea kiumbe anapofeli mtihani wa hiari.” (*Sin is when a creature fails the test of free will.* Mkufya 1999: 50) or “Dhambi ni kipimo cha unyonge wa hiari, yaani matokeo ya upumbavu wa tamaa kupewa uhuru.” (*Sin is the measure of weakness of free will, that is, the result of the folly of giving freedom to desires.* Mkufya 1999: 50) However, sin can be defined in other ways. For example, when it is said of Lucifer that “hakuwa na dhambi” (*he was not sinful,* Mkufya 1999: 229), this can only be taken to mean that his nature was not morally corrupt, not that he failed the test of free will, which obviously makes no sense in his case.

[Michael:] "The task is to implement the great word. To found a natural being having a new [form of] consciousness and find a planet to plant it. This time don't let's make haste about bringing down consciousness, let's allow the natural being ripen slowly until it is mature enough to reach the age to be conveyed openness. We made a mistake that we gave man free will too early."

It is also not necessary that Lucifer be Satan: the angels joke about the possibility of Gabriel being given satanhood (*ushetani*) in the next world, that is,

(5) "[k]azi ya kuwajaribu binadamu ili wapimwe uongofu wao kwa Mungu" (Mkufya 1999: 229)

"the work of tempting people in order to measure their piety to God".

On the other hand, it is necessary that there always be the two opposing parties, angels and devils. And there are also qualities which are necessary properties of created being, or as Michael expresses it:

(6) "*Kiumbe ni kiumbe. Aumbwe kwa moto, maji, au hata huo mwanga, bado kitakuwa kiumbe!*" (Mkufya 1999: 228)

"A creature is a creature. Be it created from fire, water, or even that light, it will still be a creature."

Raphael specifies this further:

(7) "*Kiumbe chochote cha muda mfupi katika bahari ya udaima sharti kitakerwa na ufupi wake wa uwepo. Kitazua shaka, tamaa au kichefuchefu cha kukaribia mwisho wake.*" (Mkufya 1999: 230)

"Any creature living a short time in the ocean of eternity will necessarily be troubled by the shortness of its existence. It will start feeling doubt, expectation or nausea on approaching its end."

Man is a finite being whose problems derive from facing his own finitude.<sup>8</sup> Other attributes of man are connected to this finitude, such as the perception of time and of sequence. We learn more about man's condition during Zirani's talks with devils in their camp, a lesson that Zirani unwisely suppressed in his mind during the indoctrination in the Camp of the Manifesto. As Zirani is told by Beelzebub:

(8) "*Binadamu wana historia: yaani mfuatano wa mambo yaliyowapata kabla ya utambuzi fulani; halafu wana mategemeo, yaani mambo yatakayofuata baada ya utambuzi huo. Lakini, kwa binadamu, kabla ni giza na baada pia ni giza. Mwanga wa utambuzi wa mwanadamu huwawakia pale wawapo tu. Upeo wao huu ndiyo nguzo ya siri yenyewe. Lakini kabla na baada, ni kawaida za muda, hali itokanayo na nafsi ifayo kupewa utambuzi. Kwa wafaji, mwisho wa mmoja ni kabla ya mwingine. Siku yoyote i-kabla na husababisha kabla tena. Mwanadamu ana baada na kabla. Sisi mashetani hatuna kabla.*"

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<sup>8</sup> Man's finitude restricts man's possibilities of gaining knowledge and enhancing his moral consciousness, which are instrumental in his resistance to sin (this argument is summarized in Mkufya 1999: 52f., 231ff. and it occurs many times elsewhere in the novel). Finitude is thus a condition that is relevant in a moral sense in man's relationship to the Beyond. However, finitude is also a condition that creates tension within man's life and raises the question about the meaning of life. This invites the possibility of an existentialist reading of the novel, cf. Diegner 2005.



*Sauti ilisikika ngomani ikijazia maneno hayo kwa dharau ikisema: “Hatuna baada wala badala ya baada!”* (Mkufya 1999: 50; italics by the author)

“People have history: that is, the sequence of things that happened to them before a certain conscious moment; then they have expectations, that is, things that will follow after that conscious moment. But for people, before there is darkness and after there is darkness, too. The light of consciousness of man only illuminates the moment where they are just then. This limitation of theirs is the core itself of mystery. But before and after, those are attributes of time, a state that is related to the fact that a mortal soul has been given consciousness. For mortal beings, the end of one is before another. Any day is-before and causes another ‘before’. Man has ‘after’ and ‘before’. We devils have no ‘before’.”

A voice was heard in the fortress filling these words with contempt saying: “We have no ‘after’ nor something instead of ‘after’!”

Also the qualities of spacial extension, of movement or of causal and final determination are properties that go together with finitude.<sup>9</sup>

Now, coupled with man’s finitude is his free will. This is the main contention between the devils and the angels. Lucifer wants to demonstrate that the creation of man was faulty:

(9) “[N]itadhihirisha kwamba kuumbwa kwa mtu hakukuwa na sababu wala manufaa. Kuumbwa kwa mwanadamu ni kero kwa mbingu.” (Mkufya 1999: 40)

“I will manifest that the creation of man had no reason nor benefit. The creation of man is an annoyance to heaven.”

The criticism does not concern man’s existence as such, but rather, the devils try to prove that man is too imperfect a being to be given free will. It is the combination of man’s qualities that makes up the devils’ opposition to God and angels. In the words of Beelzebub, talking to Zirani:

(10) “*Kuwepo kwako, tayari kunakupa haki na udhahiri<sup>10</sup> wa uwepo. Katika anga, chochote kikishakuwepo, haki na udhahiri wa uwepo wake huwa papo hapo. Baya kwa sasa siyo kuwepo kwako, japo hapakuwa na haja ya uwepo wa aina yenu. Baya kwa sasa ni hivyo vipawa na shauku usivyolingana navyo ulivyopewa, kisha ukapewa uhuru, yaani hiari.*” (Mkufya 1999: 49; emphasis by the author)

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<sup>9</sup> There is no explicit mention of those qualities as derived from man’s finitude, but we may conclude this based on the description of the Beyond as lacking those qualities in comparison with the world:

[M]wendo wa Ahera haukuwa na muda uliopea ukapauka kisha ukaacha historia kama huku duniani. Kuwepo kwa nchi ile hakukutawaliwa na upeo wa muda, mwendo wala eneo; hakukukadiriwa na chanzo wala tokeo. (Mkufya 1999: 142)

The course of the Beyond did not have time that would become ripe and then fade away and leave history behind like in the world. The being of that land was not governed by the limits of time, movement nor extension; it was not considered as to origin nor outcome.

<sup>10</sup> As I have argued in Rettová 2005: 95ff., the concept of *udhahiri* (an abstract noun formed from the adjective *dhahiri*, ‘distinct, evident, manifest’) in Mkufya’s *Ziraili na Zirani* is the cornerstone of a unique version of materialist philosophy, whose proponents are the dwellers of the Camp of the Manifesto (*kambi ya Dhahara*). What is manifest, is what is real, it is the true being of things. ‘Manifestness’ is defined according to certain criteria (as accessibility to the senses, to feelings or to man’s intelligence, cf. Mkufya 1999: 68 & 159), and therefore also what is real, is defined according to those criteria: whatever shows in these cognitive capacities, is real, and conversely, everything that is real must in principle be able to show in them. This is to rule out the reality of mere inventions of thinking and of faith (Mkufya 1999: 68). The choice of the criteria of ‘manifestness’ is ideological, and consequently, what is reality (what really is), is an ideological belief (*itikadi*; *ibid.*).

“Your being already gives you *the right* and *the manifestness* of existence. In the cosmos, if anything already is, *the right* and *the manifestness* of its existence are there right then. The bad thing now is not your being, although there was no need of the existence of your kind. The bad thing now is those talents and passions that you do not stand up to and that you were given, and then you were given freedom, that is, free will.”

More specifically, the devils maintain that free will is incompatible with the combination of desire and reason that constitute man's nature:

(11) [Alalu, Mungu wa giza, kupitia Beelzebabu:] “[I]lhali tamaa ni msingi wa hisia zikamilishazo umbile lake, hataweza kuimudu hiari. Na, akili aliyopewa yenye upeo mfinyu nayo pia itazongwazongwa na tamaa mpaka ishindwe kuiongoza hiari.” (Mkufya 1999: 47)

[Alalu, the God of darkness, mediated by Beelzebub:] “If desire is the foundation of the feelings that complete his nature, he will not be able to control free will. And reason that he has been given and that has a narrow scope will also be overwhelmed by desire to the measure of failing to direct free will.”

Or as Maymon (*Maimoni*) summarizes, moreover drawing attention the shortness of man's life:

(12) “Kwa kosa la mbingu, akili kumpa, hiari akaruhusiwa, tamaa akapelekewa, haja na shauku akajaziwa, kisha eti umri akapunguziwa!” (Mkufya 1999: 51)

“It was heaven's mistake to give him reason, to allow him free will, to confer desire on him, to fill him with needs and passions, and then his age was cut short!”

As we know from the end of the novel, the devils eventually won the game, they managed to turn man's free will against God and the world got destroyed. The angels only scored 3,401,531 pure souls in the entire 400 million years of man's rational consciousness (Mkufya 1999: 237). Now, would the solution be to simply create a “freedom-free” conscious being? As quote (4) says, the task is to create a being having consciousness. Strictly speaking, it does not necessarily follow from this passage that the next created being *also* must be given free will. In the first part of the quote, the angels are talking about the conditions of *any* creation of a world, but in the last sentence (where they mention free will), they are talking about *that one specific* created world that has just ended. Could it be that the “new form of consciousness” lacks free will?

In other words, is free will an arbitrary attribute of created conscious being, similarly like the element it is created from, or is it really a necessary attribute, like finitude? To know the answer to this question, we must consider the purpose of the entire game.

### 3. The purpose of the game

The purpose of the angels' and devils' game is to create a being that is as perfect as possible. The measure of perfection is this being's piety: its love of God and obedience to him. As people are told by the couple, *Bibi Kizee na Babu Kizee*, on the day of the Last Judgement:

(13) “Mbingu zilipima utiifu wenu kwa Mungu na hiari yenu ya kumpenda na kumtii bila kushurutishwa. Ndipo mukapewa mtihani wa mabaya na mema. Mabaya akakabidhiwa Lusifa na wenzake.” (Mkufya 1999: 225)

“Heaven measured your obedience to God and your free will to love him and obey him without coercion. And so you were given the examination of the evil and the good. The evil was entrusted to Lucifer and his colleagues.”

The goal of creation is to create a being that would obey God not because of coercion, not out of fear and not out of habit, but out of one’s own decision and out of love. An obedient person accepts the limitations of his or her existence and his or her understanding and overcomes them through faith. For him or her, life becomes an act of loving and getting to better know God:

(14)[Jibrili:] “[W]ale waliostahamili na kutulia, wakakabiliana na matamu au machungu wakiyaheshimu yote kama maamuzi ya Mungu, basi kwao dunia imekuwa ziara ya furaha, ucheshi na ufahamu bora zaidi kuhusu Mungu.” (Mkufya 1999: 234f.)

[Gabriel:] “Those who faced both the sweet and the bitter things with endurance and peace and respected them all as God’s decisions, for those the world became a sojourn of happiness, joy and a better understanding of God.”

Let us develop this consideration further. Obedience cannot mean necessity. It is meaningless for a being who has no free will to say it is obedient or rebellious: this being simply follows whatever determines it. To create a being having free will is the *only* possibility to create a being that is obedient to God. Therefore, free will is a necessary attribute of created conscious being.

Indeed, even finitude is a pre-condition of free will, because for an infinite being, free will would lose any meaning: an infinite being faces no conflict of choices, it can simply test each possibility. Only for a finite being are there good and bad choices, precisely because its possibilities are limited. Its knowledge is limited and its time is limited, too.

Thus we can say that the only necessary condition of created being is free will. All the other necessary qualities, even the attribute of finitude, follow from this requirement.

#### 4. Conclusion

If we now recall Leibniz’s concept of “the best of all possible worlds”, we see that this concept is operative even in W. E. Mkufya’s epic novel, *Ziraili na Zirani*. In Leibniz’s view, God would go through the infinite number of possible worlds, choosing the best possible combination from among them. Mkufya’s novel describes just one such experiment in creation. Leibniz’s requirement of the validity of logic in each created world parallels, as I have argued in this article, the requirement of the existence of beings having free will in each created world, in Mkufya’s view.

The angels’ task is to create a being having the best possible combination of qualities to go with free will. The art and the challenge of creation means balancing out the tension between



the constraints of creation and the great requirements that accompany the gift of freedom. The angels vary the arbitrary conditions of creation, such as the element from which beings are created, the time they are allowed to mature before being given consciousness, or the kind of conflict they are to face to test their obedience. The only condition that must be valid in each created world is that it must contain beings having free will.

We can inquire further: what are the reasons behind the *a priori* conditions of creation, be they logic, as in Leibniz's view, or freedom, as in Mkufya's view? Why does God want to create a world at all?

But these are questions whose answers not even the angels are entitled to know:

(15) *Hakika mvi za Ziraili sasa zilionyesha waziwazi kwamba zimeongezeka. Mikunjo michache ya ngozi kwenye paji la uso ilidhihirisha mabadiliko kidogo ya haiba yake ambayo sasa ilipendeza badala ya kutisha. Mabadiliko haya ya sura na nywele zake yalidhihirisha jinsi matukio ya ulimwengu huu uliopita, kauli na hoja za watu wake, vilivyomatiza na kumjaza hekima mpya kuhusu sanaa ya kuumba. Lakini pamoja na utata na ugumu huu mdogo, mbingu zilikuwa na wajibu usioepukika wa kuijaza dahari kwa uwepo wa maumbo, maumbile na viumbe vyenye uhai, utambuzi, na vyenye akili. Kiini cha wajibu huu hakikufahamika hata kwa malaika wakuu wa mbingu. Wajibu huu ulikuwa siri ya mbingu.* (Mkufya 1999: 237)

Of course, Azrael's hair clearly turned more grey. A few wrinkles in the skin of the forehead showed some changes in his charismatic beauty that now was pleasing rather than awe-inspiring. These changes of his face and hair revealed how the events of this world that had passed, the words and arguments of its people brought him troubles and gave him a new intellectual ability concerning the art of creation. But despite this certain trouble and difficulty, heaven had an inevitable duty to fill the aeon through the existence of forms, a nature and creatures having life, consciousness, and having reason. The essence of this duty was not comprehensible even to the archangels of heaven. This duty was heaven's mystery.

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