Allegoricalised Metaphorical Narrative in the Apostolic African Instituted Church Founding Text Genre in Zimbabwe

by

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Abstract

This paper examines the writings of Zimbabwean Apostolic African independent church founder Paul Mwazha to illustrate discursive creativity in English that has marked his difference within the Apostolic African independent church movement, culminating in the development of a new text genre of the Apostolic African independent church and its use of the 'allegoricalised metaphorical narrative' that Mwazha deploys in the apocalyptic visions he uses to construct his singularity as a world-historical individual.

Introduction

Zimbabwean African independent church (AIC) discursive activity has resulted in the modification of particular Western text genres imported into the country through missionary church teaching and Western secular education. Given the complex linguistic, religious and political landscape in Zimbabwe, Zimbabwean Christians have responded in diverse ways to Western Christian discourses that sought to shape their worldviews and identities. Some have navigated this complexity by founding AICs, such as the African Apostolic Churches (AACs), generating discourses and texts that draw upon heterogeneous discursive elements from diverse socio-cultural domains to forge new Afro-Christian identities. These domains include disparate ideological formations, such as mission-introduced Christianity and indigenous African knowledge and belief systems, such as a Shona worldview.

This work reports a major finding of research into the discursive activity of Apostolic AIC founder, Paul Mwazha 'of Africa': the discovery of his innovative use of a device which this researcher has called 'allegoricalised metaphor' or 'allegoricalised metaphorical narrative'. The case of Mwazha, a former Methodist evangelist and head teacher is of particular interest to the study of indigenous African discourses and the identities they impact as it has to do with his specific insertion as a 'world-historical individual' (Lukács, 1938) within the parameters of a national culture at a pivotal moment in its history. First is his background as an African man with a relatively advanced Western education working in the Methodist Church prior to seceding to form his African Apostolic Church (AAC). Second is his production of a 'founding text', *The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa*, published in the three major languages of Zimbabwe – Shona, Ndebele and English – as a central tool to promote his church and to appeal to a broad cross-section of Zimbabwean (and African) society. Finally, there is that he has garnered a substantial following both in Zimbabwe and beyond the country's borders. Thus, this study of the discourse of his text sheds light on how one 'educated' Zimbabwean has used textual resources available to him in a multilingual and multicultural society to create both a representation of himself and a new institution and to develop and promote new African Christian identities within the latter.

Paul Mwazha: A 'World-historical Individual'

The concept of 'world-historical individual' was first used by German idealist Hegel and notably developed by Marxist Georg Lukács. It refers to "[…] the world-historical principle which takes possession of a person at a particular moment in time, using him as an instrument for its own ends. […] Writing of the French feudal lords he (Hegel) says: 'They gave way not to Richelieu as a man but to his genius, which linked his person with the necessary principle of the unity of the state" (Lukács, 1938: http://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/youngheg/ch34.htm).

The broad context of Paul Mwazha's text is 20th Century Zimbabwe – beginning with when the country was still known as Southern Rhodesia, through the years of the rebel Rhodesian regime of Ian Smith and ending with post-independence Zimbabwe. The colonial era was characterised by racial discrimination, which provoked Black political and cultural resistance, leading to nationalist politics and a protracted armed liberation struggle that culminated in the installation of a Black nationalist government in 1980. On the religious front, indigenous Zimbabweans responded variously to missionary teaching, and, inspired by developments in South Africa, AIC Ethiopianism, AIC Apostolicism and AIC Zionism quickly emerged as the dominant responses to mainstream Christianity. Paul Mwazha became an instrument of the AIC movement jousting for power, relevance and hegemony in the newly carved Christian space. He and other AIC founders particularly found relevance as architects of a new religious order that blended Western thought with African traditional worldview to produce an African Christianity in which militant Black nationalism easily found echoes and vice-versa.

Part 1 of Mwazha's founding text provides relatively ample biographical data on him. According to it, Paul Mwazha is a 97 year old former school teacher, headmaster, and Methodist evangelist of Shona descent who quit the Methodist Church to form his AAC. Mwazha underscores the role played in his adolescence and young adulthood by white Methodist church and school authorities who saw in him zeal and potential for both academic and church work. As a result, he was recruited to train as a Methodist teacher and evangelist. After his training, he goes on to work as a teacher-cum-evangelist in a number of Methodist Church circuits in the Mashonaland Province. His work is, however, soon shrouded in controversy as other church leaders complain about his 'eccentric' approach to spirituality and church work, such as claiming to be God himself speaking directly to the congregation, encouraging public confession of sins, holding all-night revival meetings, and claiming to have the power to heal the sick and raise the dead. And as his popularity grows, so do the numbers of believers with personal allegiance to him, and thus his influence reaches beyond the boundaries of his denomination, prompting him to start an interdenominational prayer group. He eventually forms his AAC in 1959 in rural Zimbabwe at a place called Guvambwa due to pressure from his followers and "three signs" from God (Part 1: 93). This was after he had worked for several years as a Methodist evangelist-cum-school teacher.

Visions and dreams play a pivotal role in Mwazha's religious practice. His book illustrates his claim that God has spoken to him in this manner since his childhood (Part 1: 3). In 1942, at the age of 24, while working as a school teacher at Gweshe, he had had a dream in which "the Lord showed me multitudes of would-be followers of my way of worship dressed in white cassocks" (Part 1: 22). Chitando (2004: 15) reports that Mwazha claims that at the age of 22 at Guvambwa, he had a vision in which he "was commissioned to be an apostle of the African continent". Such evidence of direct access to God builds up an extraordinary spiritual persona that justifies his claim to leadership of the universal body of believers. His followers alternatively call him *Mutumwa* (God's Messenger or Angel), *Mudzidzisi* (the Teacher) or *Baba* (Father). In Part 2 (p. 21) of his founding text, Mwazha refers to himself as the "angel of Africa". Teaching – through which he imparts what he says is the true will of God – is his core business. A church itinerary given to me by Mwazha himself and entitled *"Mission yeMutumwa Paul Mwawha weAfrica"* (my translation: Mission of the Messenger Paul Mwazha of Africa) shows that between 15 August and 26 October 2008 Mwazha would have toured three Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries (Angola, Botswana and Zimbabwe), teaching in a total of five localities in those countries. He is also the key attraction at gatherings such as the annual pilgrimage to the church's shrine at Guvambwa in Zimbabwe and Pentecost gatherings held at the provincial level in Zimbabwe as well as throughout the rest of Southern Africa.

The notion of a new and prosperous Africa – Westernised [Mwazha reveals "the values of education" to villagers at the same time as he preaches "the goodness of God" to them (Part I: 19)] and yet affirming the dignity of the indigenous African – to rival other nations of the world is at the heart of Mwazha's visions throughout the two volumes of his founding text. Hence, Chitando (2003: 248) characterises Mwazha's place in AIC history as follows:

Long before the contemporary discourses on the African Renaissance, Paul Mwazha proclaimed the message of the Recreation of Africa. In his 1940 vision, Mwazha was shown a united and economically independent Africa. He went on to preach about the need for Africans to achieve high academic standards for them to challenge Western dominance. Mwazha proclaimed that Africans should fight for religious and political emancipation.

His call for the espousal of Western formal education as a strategy to attain African hegemony by out-performing Europeans in their own socio-economic set-up is at variance with the strategy adopted by earlier Apostolic AIC founders, Johane Masowe and Johane Marange who eschewed the European economy as they sought the 'Promised Land', an Africa for indigenous African people ruled by the same and where they are free to worship the Christian God according to an indigenous African understanding of the Scriptures. Mwazha thus became the instrument of a wave of younger African descendants with Western education (both secular and religious) desirous of an expression of this emerging African identity in the Christian Church.

The Text: *The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa*

The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa, Mwazha's founding text, covers a 71 year-long period, beginning with Mwazha's birth in 1918 (Part 1: 1) and ending with an account of AAC church work dated 25 September 1989 (Part 2: 91). The founding text thus straddles three significant epochs in Zimbabwe's history: the colonial era, Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence and independent Zimbabwe's first decade of existence. It is published in Zimbabwe's three official languages, Shona, Ndebele and English. For the purposes of this study, the English version is used as the primary source. As the title stipulates, the major theme of the text is the 'divine commission' of Paul Mwazha or the story of his life as founder and leader of the AAC. While Part I uses a mixture of apocalyptic visions and autobiographical data to tell the story of Mwazha, Part 2 narrates his works as leader of the AAC, such as the miracles he performed, his visions of experiences in the spiritual realm (encounters with angels, archangels, the Holy Spirit and Christ), his commissioning or ordination into a "heavenly priesthood" and, finally, the growth and expansion of his church in Zimbabwe. Part 2 also develops Mwazha's ideas on holistic African liberation and the reaffirmation of African traditional worldview. Ultimately, the founding text paints a spiritual picture of Mwazha's persona, gradually expanding his divinely appointed sphere of influence from his local Methodist parish, through the African continent to the entire world as symbolised by his claim that "the Divine House of God from where the Kingship reigns was now in Zimbabwe" (Part 2: 66).

According to his founding text, Mwazha's ministry and authority are further legitimised by the provision of tangible material answers to the existential needs of the common African person. His strategy for addressing these concerns is to conjure the Holy Spirit, causing it to intervene in human affairs. The success of this strategy (Mwazha cites examples of miracles) is portrayed as justification for more people to seek his ministry and thus join his church.

For instance, after he successfully prays for barren couples, more people with similar existential problems seek him out and subsequently join his church (Part 1). Another key strategy is the geo-cultural specificity of Mwazha's mission and ministry: he portrays himself as being of, from and (sent) to Africa (Part 1). He uses these strategies to attain an ultimate strategic goal: the elevation of his person to divine status. Without this elevation, he might as well have remained a Methodist evangelist and teacher or become a priest or pastor in another mainstream missionary-founded church since not enough indigenous African people could be counted upon to believe in the potency of the ministry of an ordinary mortal man to justify the formation of a new church.

Mwazha's founding text is the principal literature of his followers. Every AAC member and prospective member is required to acquire and read it as a primary condition for entry into the AAC. My personal experience in this regard is two-fold. First, even though I explicitly informed the AAC evangelists and bishops I met in the cities of Harare and Mutare that I needed the book for purposes of academic research, they gave it to me free of charge as part of their evangelisation strategy, with one bishop quipping that what I sought was 'Jesus' and that I was sure to find him in their church. Second, each time I asked a question regarding AAC teaching and practice, I was promptly referred to the founding text. Should I still have questions thereafter, I was advised to attend their forthcoming annual gathering at their Guvambwa shrine where, I was told, everything would become clear to me. There is thus ample evidence that an elaborate and deliberate 'discursive practice' (Fairclough, 1992) based on the founding text is at work in Mwazha's AAC, extending to a website and hymn book. To underscore the importance of written texts in general in Mwazha's discursive practice, the one video clip on his church's web site shows Mwazha explaining the text of a song from the church's hymn book and encouraging believers to memorise it along with other songs in the hymn book.

Significance of Emerging AAC Founding Text Genre

It is significant that a Zimbabwean Apostolic AIC leader such as Paul Mwazha chose to fix the history of his 'commissioning' as well as the intended meaning of his message in print form. It is also significant that African people from all walks of life – most of them with little if any reading culture (Manyawu, 2005) – strive to read these texts as if their very lives depended on them. Over and above that, it is significant that believers' testimonies and behaviour underline the importance of these texts to their faith. Even though the AAC teaches adherence to the Bible, believers tend to read first Mwazha's founding text and then the Bible, which they will read using the hermeneutic tools incorporated into the founder's text. The value of the founding text's rhetorical performance for the AAC can therefore not be overemphasised.

The AIC movement in general and Apostolic AICs of Zimbabwean origin in particular have experienced unparalleled success in terms of membership growth and socio-cultural impact. They now command arguably a larger following than Catholics or mainstream Protestants throughout southern Africa (Shoko, 2007; Pobee, 2003; Chitando, 2004) as well as the rest of Africa south of the Sahara, such as Nigeria.

Zimbabwean AICs, such the African Apostolic Church (AAC) of Paul Mwazha whose texts are examined here, are also active on a global scale through the movement's implantation beyond southern Africa. For instance, Mwazha's AAC has branches in the United Kingdom and in America (Kusema, 21 February 2011). In terms of worldview and ideology, AICs have massively impacted the southern African socio-cultural landscape, redefining thinking across the whole spectrum of domains of human activity. For instance, the concept of African Christianity derives directly from the existence of such AICs (Amanze, 1998). This success in a domain that depends massively on human verbal communication is necessarily a result of discursive prowess by the various founders and leaders of AIC churches. Discursively, Apostolic and Zionist AICs are close to an African traditional worldview, such as the perception of health problems as being due to supernatural causes and the belief that selected human beings can operate in the spirit realm as incarnations of powerful spirit beings. It may thus not be usual to associate AICs with the modern Western electronic and print media that underpin Mwazha's communication strategies that includes, a website (www.endtimemessage.org), a hymn book, and a founding text in three languages. Mwazha's recourse to modern Western technology in a church that still holds its services in the 'wilderness' (cf. www.endtimemessage.org) is indeed, an uncanny ideological blend.

Allegoricalised Metaphorical Narrative: A Blend of Metaphor and Allegory

Although in broad generic terms *The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa* is an autobiography, the content that makes up the story of Mwazha's spirituality mostly takes the form of apocalyptic visions. The book should, therefore, be called an apocalyptic (which reveals hidden knowledge) autobiography. Mixing elements of apocalypse and auto-biography is reminiscent of the discourse practice of biblical prophets: "The prophetic books contain a wide variety of literary types. Among these are visions (for example, Amos 7.1)" (*Good News Study Bible*, 1994: 1032). Mwazha uses accounts of his visions to counter allegations levelled against him by rivals as well as lay claim to spiritual leadership of African people. He enhances the rhetorical force of his refutation of his detractors' allegations by using a continuum of related devices – metaphor, extended metaphor, and allegory – in the construction of a discourse of his singularity. This continuum of devices associated with the formulation of representations enables him to create vivid images of his persona and the personae of his adversaries. Representations thus formulated are easy to memorise and use both as justification of Mwazha's secession and as promotional catch-phrases for his new church.

On one extreme of this continuum is metaphor. Metaphor is a figure of speech that uses single words or phrases to speak of a thing as being that which it only resembles, such as calling verbal criticism of the press an 'assault' on the press. An analogy is therefore drawn between a phenomenon and another phenomenon which it resembles by exploiting the intersection between the two ideas (Galisson and Coste, 1976; Bounegru and Forceville, 2011; El Refaie, 2003 & 2009).

For instance, and this is discussed in more detail below, Mwazha uses the metaphor of "a (satanic) Giant" (Part 1: 54) to denote the greatest opponent to his spiritual practice in the Methodist Church, his superintendent, Rev. Wright. More complex metaphors beyond the usual word or phrase are called extended metaphors. Mwazha makes use of extended metaphor, which is a combination of metaphors growing out of the initial metaphor.

The term 'metaphor' derives from the (Greek-derived) Latin word *metaphora*, which means 'transposition'. Metaphors therefore operate by transposing or transferring an idea or ideas contained in one term, phrase, or combination of phrases into another term, which is the very essence of analogy. In other words, a metaphor establishes a relationship of equivalence between one thing and another thing, which it resembles but with which it is not usually associated. On the basis of the idea of transposition or transfer, a tenor-vehicle-ground analytical model, mostly based on rhetorician Richards' (1936) reflections on metaphor, has been developed. Tenor refers to the thing that the metaphor denotes; vehicle refers to the actual linguistic structure (word, phrase or more complex formulation) used as a metaphor; and ground is the idea or quality that is referred to by the combination of tenor and vehicle.

Allegory, which is on the other end of the continuum referred to here, is a literary device that consists in the symbolic use of narratives to convey secondary meanings not explicitly enunciated in the literal narrative. It is an author's deliberate choice to *replace* real events and people by a highly constructed story wherein every aspect and feature parallels an aspect of the subject's real life experiences. Cowan (1981: 110) quotes early 20th century scholar Walter Benjamin as defining allegory as the process of "transforming things into signs", hence many classical definitions of allegory as 'a contained series of metaphors' (Schiebe, undated). In other words, the text of an allegory is not to be taken literally but figuratively as denoting a different meaning from that of the text's words. Allegory works through the transformation and replacement of real places, characters, and actions by constructed ones. Recognising an allegory as such requires that the author and his audience both see the text as referring to other people, places, events and issues than those seen on the surface of the text. For instance, Orwell's (1979) *Animal Farm* was taken by Orwell and his European readers as a satirical critique of Soviet Stalinism [Orwell regarded Stalinist communism as 'a counter-revolutionary force' (Orwell, 4 May 1940)]. It was also serialised in Zimbabwe's *Daily News* newspaper in 2001 as a critique of unjust post-independence rule, with each place, character and action finding a parallel in the Zimbabwe of President Robert Mugabe's reign (Stewart, 2003).

Because of its use to parallel real-life places, people and deeds, allegory 'naturally' lends itself to moral discourses and is consequently a key feature of religious rhetoric, where its most emblematic manifestation is the famous parables of Jesus Christ. 'Dream allegory' or 'dream vision', a sub-category of allegory, is more apt to account for use of allegory in apocalyptic visions. It is an "allegorical tale presented in the narrative framework of a dream" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2012). This sub-category is particularly useful in religious rhetoric where it transforms ordinarily intolerable notions into 'truths' that form the bedrock of a movement's faith: "Especially popular in the Middle Ages, the device (dream allegory) made more acceptable the fantastic and sometimes bizarre world of personifications and symbolic objects characteristic of medieval allegory" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2012).

Being wholly dependent on parallel representation, allegory works by painting vivid pictures. One famous 'Christian allegory' that the mission school-educated Mwazha is likely to have read is Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress: in the similitude of a dream*. One key feature of Bunyan's text in all its versions is the use of pictorial illustrations. Hofmeyr (2001; 2011: 13) contends that such illustrations have probably had more influence on early African Christian thinking than the written text itself:

> The use of Bunyan illustrations has to be understood as part of the field of 'visual evangelism'. As practitioners sensitive to the capacity of different media, missionaries were quick to appreciate the proselytizing potential of visual material. Pictures could create a spectacle and draw a crowd.

By alluding to sight ["vision" (Part 1: 24) or "I was shown […]" (Part 1: 3)], Mwazha and his audience understand that they are in the realm of visual communication: the narrator of the vision primarily gives an account of what s/he "saw". Indeed, even Mwazha's characterisation of his founding text as "a translation of heavenly visions and revelations" (Part 1 cover page sub-title), which he also calls "dreams" (Part 1: 60), closely echoes Bunyan's (1965) description of his novel as resembling the account of a 'dream'.

However, whereas Mwazha often appears to cue allegory, it can be argued that his text hardly contains any real allegory. Whereas he and his audience (followers) generally take his visions as *real life experiences*, and therefore not their constructed parallels, he also occasionally cues some visions as constructed stories that demonstrate the spirituality of his deeds and thoughts without *replacing* them as an allegory would. This, therefore, means that such stories have a metaphoric function. His use of story-like extended metaphors is thus so complex it draws substantially upon allegory and could be termed quasi-allegory. Thus, whereas Mwazha would like his audience to believe he really does have a heavenly body as shown to him by Jesus in a vision (Part 1: 3) and that he literally prevented World War III by his actions in a vision (Part 2: 62), visions of his multiple combats with the devil are used as figurative representations of his real struggles in the Methodist Church, as similes and metaphors through which Mwazha is saying his experiences are similar to such and such vision and evil people are comparable to such and such creature. This is why, unlike Bunyan's tale and unlike a parable of Jesus, which are stand-alone discursive events, Mwazha's visions are weaved into his autobiography within which they combine to form a complete narrative whole.

Mwazha's interpretations of his revelations confirm their blend of characteristics of metaphor and allegory. Take, for instance, his vision of the 'man from Elber' (Part 1: 42):

A revelation came to me through a vision. I was at the east and noticed a large building in the middle of the forest. I entered this building and came into a great hall […]. I left the building and went to sit near large musasa trees which were to the west and realised that I sat with another man on my left who was not known to me. I noticed another man standing further left holding a closed large book (sic) in his right hand. I asked him languidly, "Where do you come from?" He replied, "I come from Elber. I have come to teach you about the future." I heard [the] flapping of wings as he spoke and looked up to see a winged man come to land gently in front of us and reiterated (sic) the words of the first man saying, "The teaching that this man is about to relate to you was taught long before in the third heaven." Taking in these words, I turned west to the sound of two men driving their cattle towards us in a deliberate effort to stampede our discussion. I then looked southward and noticed a large pile of gold chains. The man from Elber stood up still clutching the voluminous book in his hands, and ran to pick up the chain, tied it around one of the musasa trees a short distance to the south and tied it to a similar tree that was to the north and said, "I have closed off the West." The herd of cattle was deviated to run either side of the chain toward the east with the two cattle drivers following them (Part 1: 41-42).

Mwazha takes this vision of two men trying to disrupt his reception of the 'new teaching of Jesus Christ' to signify the attempts of his real detractors to disrupt his spiritual teaching in the Kwenda Circuit of the Methodist Church through a resolution of the forthcoming 'Quarterly Meeting'. Consequently, he takes the man from Elber's defeat of the men with the cattle to signify his (Mwazha's) victory over his real enemies. He frames his interpretation of this vision in the form of a prayer:

I woke up to kneel and pray facing east saying, "I pray to you O! God, Creator of Heaven and Earth […]. You answered my prayers when I needed you over the issue of the leaders of the church who had gathered to work out strategies to curb the teaching of your loyal servant Jesus. You, dear God, you sent me the man from Elber, you gave him the power to send off my attackers. I thank you that he did. He used the gold curtain to cordon off the west and the enemy was not able to shut off your message through Jesus in the gospel saying, 'Preach the Gospel, heal the sick, raise the dead and cleanse those with leprosy'" (Part 1: 42).

The fact that Mwazha uses this vision as signifying the acquisition of victory in the spiritual realm prior to victory in the temporal 'Quarterly Meeting' cues a number of things. First is the possibility of the conceptualisation of the parallel, disjunct and yet symbiotic co-existence of spiritual and temporal worlds in Mwazha's teaching. Then there is the possibility that Mwazha post-contextually uses a 'vision' as a metaphor to underscore his spiritual view of the processes of the 'Quarterly Meeting'. Finally, the vision could be intended as a wholly constructed story of the process of how God overcame Mwazha's enemies in Kwenda Circuit, a process culminating in the account of a real 'Quarterly Meeting'. Indeed, Mwazha's subsequent use of the vision strongly suggests that it is an allegory:

> I travelled to the Quarterly Meeting at Chideme with my colleagues […]. I gave them details of the vision I had. I explained how God had come to our defence with all his heavenly might. In allaying their fear, I assured them that we were unlikely to be deterred in serving God in the new mode that we had found (Part 1: 43).

However, the fact that the story of Mwazha's temporal conflict with his detractors is actually told in its entirety in autobiographical fashion – the reader gets all the details of the plot against Mwazha as well as a detailed account of the 'Quarterly Meeting' – means that the spiritual narrative of the 'man from Elber' does not *replace* the temporal narrative. It, however, does parallel the temporal version: the story of the 'man from Elber' is embedded within the account of the 'Quarterly Meeting', so that the temporal narrative is split into two sections separated by the vision of the man from Elber. It, therefore, functions as an unusually expansive extended metaphor: its tenor is the conflict pitting Mwazha and his spiritual teaching against his detractors in Kwenda Circuit; its vehicle is the man from Elber, his teaching from "the third heaven" (Part 1: 42) and his actions; and its ground is the triumph of Mwazha's spirituality over his mainstream rivals.

Yet, Mwazha, who portrays his 'heavenly body' as really existing concurrently with his temporal one, would not call this vision a metaphor since, for him, the apocalyptic rendition of his enemies reveals a spiritual aspect of them that is as real as their temporal appearances, personalities and conduct. In addition, the tenor-vehicle-ground model could also be used to describe an allegory, which only differs from extended metaphor in that it is a stand-alone narrative that is much more expansive than metaphor. The sense of allegory is buttressed by strong reliance on symbolism, a good example of which is Mwazha's use of the cardinal directional terms east and west.

The west – his nemesis Rev. Wright is of British origin – is the source of evil, the origin of adversarial forces, such as the men driving the cattle (and, therefore, Satan), working against him while the east, to which he turns in prayer, is the seat of God. Personification of the west by use of the capital letter – "the West" – cues the civilizational and ideological block known by that name, thus insinuating that western countries are satanic while the eastern block is holy. Take into account the fact that this vision was recorded during the Cold War era at a time when Zimbabweans were fighting white settlers generally perceived as being of British and therefore western origin and that Mwazha and other Apostolic church leaders have turned out to be staunch supporters of the Black nationalist and socialist movement led by Robert Mugabe (Makova 2013), and the intention to use these two cardinal points in the manner just described becomes more probable.

Indeed, Mwazha goes on to report how the West has lost God's favour, leading to the transfer of "God's Headquarters" to a location in Zimbabwe, which is home to God's angel, Mwazha. (Part 2). However, this vision should not be called allegory either since it is not meant to parallel any other possible (but unwritten) narrative, but to inform him and his followers that victory over his enemies has *already* been achieved in the spiritual realm and that all that remains is temporal confirmation of that achievement.

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Consequently, the spiritual ('allegorical'/'metaphorical') and the temporal narratives are not mutually exclusive in Mwazha's use of the vision examined here as is the case with typical Western allegories, such as *Pilgrim's Progress* or *Animal Farm*. Mwazha's use of the apocalyptic genre thus blurs boundaries between allegory and metaphor, leaving what can at best be termed parallel 'allegoricalised metaphorical accounts' meant to underscore his spirituality.

Such use of 'allegory' to illustrate a point about objective reality, which is explicated by the narrator, is comparable to Plato's "Allegory of the cave" (Heidegger, 2002), in particular 'Part One' of that book: Plato's narrator, Socrates, explicitly compares the allegorical situation of prisoners in a cave to the philosophical notion of the conceptualisation of the truth, called the 'unhidden'. Compare this to Mwazha's use of another apocalyptic narrative as a representation of the end of the resistance of Rev. Wright, Mwazha's superintendent, to Mwazha's spiritual faith healing practice. In Part 1 Chapter 18, Wright's conciliatory conclusion of his disagreement with Mwazha is preceded by a vision of an obstacle that Mwazha overcomes by emulating Jesus. The account of the conflict between Mwazha and Wright is the subject of two meetings with the vision of the obstacle – represented as a gorge – situated in the intervening days between those two meetings. Note that this is consistent with the use of a vision within a temporal narrative in the account of the 'Quarterly Meeting' seen above. After the ominous conclusion of the first encounter – "He (Wright) imposed his authority and said sarcastically, 'Ya [sic], come to Kwenda on Monday and do tell us what the Lord will have said to you'" (Part 1: 63) – Mwazha has a vision in which he and Jesus go on a "mission to Great Britain" (Part 1: 61), home country of Rev. Wright (a strong hint that this vision concerns Wright), where Wright has recently been on holiday. Mwazha, who avoids meeting Wright prior to the vision despite the latter's orders that he does so, risks losing his job (head teacher and evangelist at a Methodist school in a Circuit whose superintendent is Rev. Wright). He reports that vision in these terms:

> I had a visionary dream that Monday night when I found myself in England at a spot in the north of that country. I saw the Lord Jesus Christ leading me as we walked heading north […]. We walked all the way to Scotland. While we pattered along, I noticed a large gorge before us. I thought the Lord who was in the lead would hesitate before he leaped across. I said to myself, "If it had been me in front, I would have had no trouble and bounced over easily." The Lord Jesus stepped over the gorge. I had to leap over to keep up with him. Jesus turned and retreated east. I stayed on his trail. I woke up and thanked God. The vision made it clear to me that Reverend Wright was not likely to deter my efforts at spreading the Word of Jesus Christ. I addressed the teachers and the school children and told them that I was not going to be asked to leave the school after all (Part 1: 65).

The metaphor of the gorge is used here as a polysemous sign to summarise Mwazha's spiritual view of Wright's power and its potential to frustrate Mwazha's ministry and, even more significantly, disrupt his relationship with Jesus. It also represents the division created in the church by Mwazha's spiritual practice, a division blamed here on Wright's intransigence.

Wright thus embodies Mwazha's conceptualisation of the challenge facing the Methodist Church at that point in time. It is thus of the utmost importance that Mwazha overcomes Wright's oppositional stance with the direct help of Jesus who comes "in His divine person to contend with those who dare upset his loyal servants" (Part 1: 65). Strict emulation of Christ's every move in the vision connotes Mwazha's notion that opposition to him in the Methodist Church is tantamount to rejecting Christ.

Wright's subsequent right-about-turn and declaration of full support for Mwazha's practice – "The Reverend […] said, 'Please carry on with this work. I shall inform the church that you have permission to do this type of work'" (Part 1: 67) – is thus the signified, the ground, of Mwazha's spiritual feat of crossing the gorge. Ultimately, the gorge underscores Mwazha's difference from the best Christendom has had to offer hitherto. The ease, indeed nonchalance, with which he crosses the gorge after Jesus evokes the story of Peter walking on the water in Jesus' wake in order to suggest Mwazha's superiority to Peter by contrasting the former's success to the latter's failure. Indeed, evocation of the possibility of hesitation by Jesus means Mwazha sees him as an equal who could fail where Mwazha would never fail. It means Mwazha no longer even needs the reassuring presence of Jesus as his own spirituality is now equal to that of the latter. The vision therefore serves to give a spiritual dimension to Mwazha's triumph over Rev. Wright's resistance, hence its use as a parallel narrative to the temporal one.

However, this extended metaphor is located within a constructed story with a beginning and end as well as well-defined characters in a clearly demarcated space, suggesting Mwazha is using a mini-allegory. Again the symbolic use of cardinal directional points – this time the east is used to signify the seat of God to which Jesus and Mwazha return after successfully and effortlessly accomplishing their mission – buttresses the impression that we are in the presence of an allegory embedded in the story of the formation of the AAC. Interpretation of the dream to mean that material reality has already been altered in Mwazha's favour even before tangible events have occurred further underscores the intention to use the dream as an allegory. However, inclusion of an account of the said material events in a parallel narrative within the same text as the dream means we can no longer treat the account of the dream as a pure allegory, because it becomes an extended metaphor with the structure of and function of allegory.

Conclusion

This article has shown that the evolution of the English language is driven by uses of the language in disparate cultural, historical and geographical spaces. Thus, varieties of the language continue to prosper on more or less separate trajectories, growing ever more different as they are deployed to meet the ever changing needs of their respective speech communities. Mwazha's use of the English language in a religious foundational text that articulates his response to the hegemony of Western missionary thinking in the Methodist Church reflects a peculiar blending of heterogeneous generic elements to support discourse strategies required by and for the historic moment in which he finds himself and of which he is an instrument.

This buttresses the well-established principle of the inseparability of linguistic development and cultural dynamism and that of genre and worldview (Fairclough, 1992). Mwazha defies generic boundaries established in Western discourse practice to use a metaphor-allegory continuum as a key feature of his apocalyptic visions, cueing the reader to recognise an unusual generic category of this exercise called 'allegoricalised metaphorical narrative' or 'allegoricalised metaphor'. Allegoricalised metaphorical narrative is thus a prominent feature of the particular category of text that Mwazha has pioneered in the Apostolic AIC foundational text (Manyawu, 2012).

Mwazha uses allegoricalised metaphorical narrative to construct the rhetorical strategy of seamless blending of elements of the apocalyptic autobiographical discourses that together constitute the generic underpinnings of his text. Through it, he tests and redefines the boundaries between metaphor and allegory to put the spiritual and objective elements of his narrative on the same plane. This cues the reader to take the spiritual as objective reality while seeing objective phenomena as spiritual, culminating in the legitimation of the spiritual or apocalyptic as a constitutive part of objective reality.

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