Indigenous African generic footprints: the case of Paul Mwazha's *The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa*

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Abstract

Contemporary African text genres have mostly been viewed as imitating foundational Western templates such that, other than folkloric genres representative of an exotic pre-colonial past, one cannot truly talk of African text genres as in genres that originated in Africa. This article argues that the wave of African liberation movements of all guises is likely to have engendered new (spoken and written) text genres or significantly modified existing ones but that this impact has gone largely unrecognised in the areas of discourse analysis and genre studies. In the religious domain, an example is Zimbabwean African Instituted Church (AIC) founder Paul Mwazha's stand against White hegemony in the Methodist Church, which culminated in the production of a foundational text titled The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa Part 1 and Part II. Viewing genre as text type, this article identifies and discusses prominent textual cues on the surface of Mwazha's book to demonstrate that he has contributed to the development of a genre hitherto unrecognised by genre specialists: the Apostolic AIC founding text. Buying into the postmodern thinking that there is no absolute textual originality but only idiosyncratic selection and mixing of pre-existing textual, generic and discursive resources in response to particular rhetorical needs, intertextuality is used to frame the analysis of Mwazha's text. The article reveals a unique selection and blending of characteristics of other textual genres and discourses, such as autobiography, allegory, apocalypse and Apostolic AIC spirituality. The article argues that it is this creative and unprecedented blend that signals the emergence of a new textual genre, the Apostolic AIC founding text.

Key words: Genre, African Instituted Churches (AICS), Founding Text, Discourse, Text, Intertextuality, Interdis

Introduction

The contestation of White power and hegemony in colonised African societies entailed the use of available linguistic resources to affirm various

African traditional worldviews while denouncing power relations and ideological orientations presented by the colonists as occurring naturally across the social domains. Such contestation is tantamount to the rejection of discursive naturalisation (Fairclough, 1992) whereby the discursive strategies and text types (text genres) of the dominant class (in this case, race) are accepted as the norm. From a philosophical perspective, Salami (2008) uses the concept of foundational thinking, the hegemonic ideal whereby certain ideas are regarded as absolutely true, universally applicable and, therefore incontestable, to show the enormity of the challenge faced by those Africans seeking to challenge hegemonic Western concepts and replace them with indigenous African ones. This article uses intertextuality and interdiscursivity to argue that Black Zimbabwean church founder and leader, Paul Mwazha, has used the opportunity to write a book that tells the story of his secession from the Methodist Church, *The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa*, to challenge colonial notions of inherent Black inferiority and White superiority. If that challenge is manifest in the book's content, its discursive and linguistic strategies show that the said challenge has also entailed so much generic novelty that the book can only be categorised in a

genre hitherto unaccounted for, the Apostolic AIC founding text genre. Using intertextual analysis, approached from within the broader framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this article deconstructs the composition of this generic response to hegemonic Western foundational thinking in Christian discursive practice by identifying and discussing linguistic and discursive cues on the surface of Mwazha's book.

African responses to Western dominance in the wake of the colonial dispensation have been accounted for in terms of literary, political, economic and even military strategy. However, little attention has been paid to language use (discourse) by Africans in response to Western dominance. Apart from Manyawu's work (2008; 2010; 2012a; 2012b), there is no known intertextual or interdiscursive study of Zimbabwean religious discursive production. However, critical discourse analyses of instances of post-independence Zimbabwean political discourse have been conducted by Love (2000; 2009) as well as Love and Vezha (2009). These articles focus on the discursive dynamics involved in the shaping of a democratic dispensation in Zimbabwe. Due to such scant attention to the use of language by Africans in the religious social

2

practice, remarkable generic developments might be going unnoticed by genre scholars. This article thus fills a gap in this area at a time when Christianity is on the rise in Africa but on the wane in the West. It also challenges African linguists and discourse analysts to look beyond such well-documented domains as literature to other social practices for instances of language use in order to develop a corpus that is more completely representative of Africa and its diverse societies.

Intertextuality and interdiscursivity

It is believed that the term intertextuality was invented by the semiotician Julia Kristeva who used it to synthesise Bakhtin's concepts of heteroglossia and dialogism (Martin, 2011), thus contributing to the development of the notion of "cultural recycling" (Orr, 2003: 7) through textual production and consumption. Perhaps the best known view of intertextuality is that it refers to the idea that, "Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations and is the absorption and transformation of another" (Kristeva, 1980: 15). However, the notion of textual interconnectedness is the very bedrock of modern and postmodern thinking. Arguing that the development of the concept of intertextuality shows the continuity between modernism and postmodernism, Haberer (2007: 54), following Samoyault (2001), calls intertextuality "the memory of literature" as well as the "solidarity of texts" (ibid: 55). Emerging in the 1960s, the era of the realisation of the 'death of the author' (Barthes, 1968) – meaning that "nobody has authority over the meaning of the text, and that there is no hidden, ultimate, stable meaning to be deciphered" (Haberer, 2007: 58) – intertextuality means that the author can no longer be seen as sole omnipotent creator of meaning. Thus, "it is not true that works are created by their authors. Works are created by works, texts are created by texts, altogether they speak to each other independently of the intentions of their authors" (Umberto Eco, cited in Haberer, 2007: 57). What authority the 'author-God' (as distinct from the writer or scriptor) has lost through the concept of intertextuality is displaced towards the reader: the intertext is "the corpus of texts the reader may legitimately connect with the one before his eyes" (Rifatterre, 1984: 142, cited in Haberer, 2007: 57).

Fairclough (1992) identifies two types of intertextuality, which he calls manifest intertextuality and constitutive intertextuality. He coins the term interdiscursivity to denote constitutive intertextuality. Manifest intertextuality refers to the overt

3

incorporation of other texts into the text under study (Fairclough, 1992). Such intertextuality takes two forms. Incorporated other texts can be explicitly flagged by unambiguous textual means such as quotation marks. Alternatively, the overt or explicit markers that frame the incorporated text are absent, so that "a text may 'incorporate' another text without the latter being explicitly cued: one can respond to another text in the way one words one's own text, for example" (Fairclough, 1992: 104). This means that an intertextual or interdiscursive analysis must pay close attention to the linguistic aspect of the text.

Unlike manifest intertextuality which focuses on the incorporation of other texts, constitutive intertextuality (interdiscursivity) is concerned with the appropriation of characteristics, traces and echoes of other discourses, genres, registers and styles into a text (Fairclough 1992; Love, 2009; Bhatia, 2010): "Thus one can talk of 'interview genre', 'conversational style', 'the register of cookery books', or 'scientific medical discourse'" (Fairclough, 1992: 124). Such intertextuality is constitutive to the extent that it configures the discursive and generic conventions that go into the production of a complex text, thus making it heterogeneous (Bakhtin, 1986; Bhatia, 2010). Fairclough (1992:

104) introduces the new term 'interdiscursivity' in order "to underline that the focus is on discourse conventions rather than other texts as constitutive". Thus, interdiscursivity focuses on specifying deeper socio-cultural conventions deployed in the text under examination in order to enhance its rhetorical performance.

As the ultimate concern of interdiscursive analysis, genre
> [...] overarches the other types (discourse, style, register, etc.), in the sense that genres correspond closely to types of social practice [...] and the system of genres which obtains in a particular society at a particular time determines which combinations and configurations the other types occur in (Fairclough, 1992: 125).

Bakhtin's (1978) discussion of the heterogeneity of the humoristic novel offers ample examples of the incorporation of diverse genres into the novel genre, leading to the characterisation of the novel as a 'hybrid' genre. Likewise, Bhatia (2010) contends that professional communication genres are inherently interdiscursive. He gives the example of the corporate annual report genre which results from a blend of elements

4

of four other professional genres. Thus, when a text incorporates another or parts of it, it also absorbs elements of that text's constitutive conventions, so that, like a living organism, it integrates and is modified and enriched by the incorporated text's original genre. Interdiscursivity is, therefore, appropriation across various social practices and cultures (Bhatia, 2010). Following Bakhtin (1986), Fairclough (1992: 103) contends that when texts draw upon conventions in this manner, they "may also reaccentuate them by, for example, using them ironically, parodically, or reverently, or may mix them in various ways". The genre from which characteristics are drawn is also modified and enriched by its use in the new discursive environment (Bhatia, 2010; Dewhirst and Sparks, 2003). This heterogeneity or hybridity is the source of the inherent instability of the meaning of a given text so that various recipients of the same text may not obtain the same meaning from it. Reading thus entails the interpretation of utterances, which are themselves interpretations of previous other texts. It is the synchronic exchange of meanings gleaned from infinite strata of past interpretations of previous texts available to the interlocutors. This echoes Kristeva's (1986) notions of 'vertical' and 'horizontal' intertextuality by which is meant the interplay of discourses and texts along synchronic and diachronic lines, meaning

"connections between discourses (and texts) over time (vertical intertextuality and interdiscursivity) as well as synchronically (horizontal intertextuality and interdiscursivity) within repertoires" (Blommaert, 2005: 253).

Discourse selection denotes the choice of other genres, discourses and styles whose characteristics are to be incorporated into the importing text while discourse configuration refers to the particular deployment of the characteristics of each selected genre, discourse, voice, or style within that text (Fairclough, 1995). Configuration is conceptualised in terms of the context into which each imported discourse, genre, voice, register or style is located as well as the manner and effect of its incorporation. The analyst thus identifies other discourse conventions (discourses, genres, registers, voices and styles) deployed together in the importing text and genre. The analyst is also interested in the relationship between the imported discourse or generic convention and those that constitute the context into which it is imported. Configuration may thus take various forms depending on the text's attitude towards the genre or discourse in question. For instance, in a polemic genre such as newspaper editorial commentary, a discourse, genre, voice, or style may be treated as

5

'dominant' or 'oppositional' in the context of the ideological stance favoured by the article. In this regard, a particular discourse, genre, or voice may be accorded more prominence than another in order to convey a sense of the dominance of the ideology to which it is linked. Yet another discourse type may be seamlessly 'embedded' in another so as to bolster the rhetorical performance of the 'embedding' discourse type by, for instance, validating it (Fairclough, 1995).

Intertextuality and interdiscursivity are thus spaces for power struggles:

> Not only can one chart the possibilities and limitations for intertextual processes within particular hegemonies and states of hegemonic struggle, one can also conceptualize intertextual processes and processes of contesting and restructuring orders of discourse as processes of hegemonic struggle in the sphere of discourse which have effects upon, as well as being affected by, hegemonic struggle in the wider sense (Fairclough, 1992: 103).

This article identifies discursive strategies used to select and configure characteristics of various discourses, styles and genres in Mwazha's founding text. It also characterises the nature and rhetorical effect of the interplay between the discourse and generic conventions thus incorporated and interwoven in the text to form a coherent and persuasive whole.

Discourse naturalisation

Naturalisation is used here to refer to a process whereby discursive strategies are used to enable particular power relations, ideological orientations and discourse conventions to be regarded as normal, conventional or inherent in a given genre or social practice. The ultimate outcome of this process is the hegemonic ideal whereby certain ideas are regarded as foundational and therefore incontestable (Salami, 2008).

Analysis of Mwazha's founding text

The characteristics of various discourses, genres, and styles have been woven together to produce *The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa* in a way that suggests the emergence of a new text genre. The manner of their selection and configuration will now be discussed.

Use of the autobiographic genre

The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa reads like the story of Mwazha's life: his birth, early life, adolescence, education and career in the Methodist Church, and the

6

formation and growth of his African Apostolic Church (AAC). In terms of rhetorical strategy, Mwazha draws upon the autobiographic genre to validate the account of the development of his extraordinarily different spirituality – sole justification of his secession from the Methodist Church – by exploiting the notions of truth and historicity associated with the genre. He therefore constructs a unique spiritual persona out of historical events post-contextually represented in spiritual terms. Chapter titles such as that of *Part 1* Chapter 1 – "Early boyhood and beginning of Christian wisdom" – juxtapose the precociousness of Mwazha's Christian faith and the use of autobiographic conventions as the founding text's principal genre. For instance, this title's use of nominalisation announces the intention to situate events in a particular stage of the subject's life as well as explain the origins of the author's (Christian) convictions and worldview in objective terms of events as well as temporal and spatial location. Another example is the use of temporal location in the founding text's first chapter. In the body of the chapter, two dates are mentioned, one in very precise terms –"25th of October, 1918" – and the other less detailed – "1929" (*Part 1*: 1). Other markers of time are non-numerical: "after the death of my father", "at that

time", and "it was not long after I was born" (*Part 1*: 1). Furthermore, the thematic focus of this chapter – Mwazha's birth, near-death experience and regeneration through Christian baptism and renaming – reflects a strategy that blurs the lines between historicity and spirituality.

The packaging of spiritual discourse in an autobiographic text is bolstered by the use of the identities and voices of real people to ground Mwazha's account of his unique spiritual development in a frame of historical fact, thus legitimating his claim of a superior spiritual persona. Indeed, it is the representation of real human characters that lends credibility to the concurrent incorporation of divine voices such as that of God and Jesus to underscore Mwazha's difference. In his *Part 1* Chapter 3, representation of such authoritative voices as widely-read local and international media and a Catholic priest of European origin as keenly interested in Mwazha's claim to have received a blueprint for the recreation of Africa from Jesus amply illustrates his use of this strategy:

> **Extract 1:** In the middle of 1940 toward the end of my teacher-training studies, the Lord Jesus revealed to me how Africa was to be recreated. I wrote to a local publication, the "Bantu Mirror" and it was published worldwide [...]. The Reader's

Digest wrote to me to open up dialogue over this revelation. Father Cripps, a European based at Marondamashanu Mission in Chivhu, wrote to suggest we correspond regularly concerning these developments (*Part 1*: 16).

Extract shows collocation of elements of the Apostolic AIC apocalyptic genre (the revelation), the biographic genre (the narrative: temporal and spatial location, events, the first person narration, and the past tense), media discourse (references to media publications) and communication discourse (correspondence). A linguistic analysis of this extract shows how these genres and discourses interrelate. The first sentence uses a subordinate circumstantial clause comprising two adverbs of time "In the middle of 1940" and "toward the end of my teacher-training studies" to anchor the event reported in the main clause (divine revelation) in the real life of the narrator, Mwazha. Location of Jesus at the head of the main clause highlights the agency of the divine in Mwazha's life. The indirect object complement 'to me' excludes all other claimants to such revelation and completes the picture of a direct and exclusive line of communication between God and Mwazha. The combination of the indicative mood of the finite verb of the main clause – 'revealed' – and its tense – the past tense – anchors the event in historical time to connote historical 'truth'.

The revelation, now established as historical fact, is immediately followed, in the ensuing sentence, by a verifiable historical report: the composition of an article and its publication in the *Bantu Mirror* newspaper. This apparent accumulation of historical events, cues the reader to place the revelation and the writing and publication of an article, in the same category, that of real-life facts. Note also the sense of triumph in the phrase "and it was published worldwide". The conjunctive 'and' presents the writing and publication of Mwazha's article as a series of independent events. He could have written and failed to be published. The implication is that expectation to be published may not have been very high. Mwazha thus appears to want to represent the publication as a miracle in order to instil awe in his audience. The desire to use this publication to validate Mwazha's spirituality is further reflected in the contradiction between describing the *Bantu Mirror* as a "local publication" and claiming his article in that newspaper "was published worldwide". The adverb 'worldwide' evokes Mwazha's evangelistic goal as

8

well as his claim to being God's chosen leader of all Christians. That attitude towards the validating power of communication, particularly through Western voices and media, persists throughout the extract as he cites *The Reader's Digest* and Father Cripps. The spiritual is thus validated by the secular in this mix of genres, discourses and voices.

Such use of the autobiographical genre enables Mwazha to link his ascension to "divine servitude" (*Part 1*: 56) to his filial relationship with God, which he also calls "God's association with me" (*Part 1*: 56): "I reflected over all that God had done for me starting as far back as the day I had reached out in prayer and asked that He be my Father who art in heaven as mine had died when I was a boy" (*Part 1*: 56). This spiritual 'genealogical' link to God becomes the conceptual frame which renders his achievements, including secession, inevitable and the status into which he will be consecrated his 'by birth'. Thus, the presentation of spiritual claims as autobiographic fact is used to underscore Mwazha's similarity to Jesus who, despite being God before coming down to earth, still had to prove his divine nature and difference through various miraculous signs. Indeed, Mwazha's subsequent use of a river for consecration (*Part 1*: 57-59), while not exactly similar to Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan, resonates with it.

The allegorical genre

Allegory consists in the symbolic use of narratives to convey secondary meanings not explicitly enunciated in the literal narrative. In an allegory, events, characters and places are metaphorically used to express truths about parallel real life situations. Allegory therefore lends itself 'naturally' to moral discourses and is consequently a key feature of religious rhetoric, such as the parables of Jesus Christ. 'Dream allegory' or 'dream vision', a sub-category of allegory, is more apt to account for Mwazha's use of apocalyptic visions. This sub-category 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 symbolic representation, allegory works by painting vivid mental pictures. By alluding to sight ["vision" (*Part 1*: 24) or "I was shown" (*Part 1*: 3)], Mwazha cues his audience to enter into the realm of visual communication: the narrator of the vision gives an account of what s/he "saw" (and "heard"). Indeed, even Mwazha's description

9

of his founding text as "a translation of heavenly visions and revelations" (*Part 1* sub-title), which he also calls "dreams" (*Part 1*: 60), closely echoes the symbolic nature of Bunyan's (1965) *Pilgrim's progress* as the account of a 'dream'.

The founding text often treats Mwazha's visions as cryptic substitutes for his real battles with rivals within the Methodist Church. Mwazha's interpretations of his revelations confirm their allegorical use. Eight cases of the infusion of allegoric narrative into apocalyptic visions have been found in Mwazha's *Part 1*. Four of those visions are concerned with Mwazha's climactic moment of triumph over his Methodist detractors. Of those four visions, one is discussed here: Mwazha's use of a vision to portray processes leading to his triumph over the resistance of Rev. Wright, his superintendent in real life.

Part 1 Chapter 18 reports Rev. Wright's conciliatory conclusion of his conflict with Mwazha. This is preceded by a vision that allegorically portrays Rev. Wright as an obstacle that Mwazha overcomes by emulating Jesus. The account of the conflict between Mwazha and Rev. Wright is distributed into two encounters of these two opponents. These two encounters are separated by the allegoric vision, which, in the autobiographic narrative, is situated in the intervening days between the two encounters. Subsequent to the ominous end of the first encounter – "He 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, where the latter has recently been on holiday. Mwazha reports that vision in these terms:

> **Extract 2:** 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 ... While we pattered on, I noticed a large gorge between us ... The Lord stepped over the gorge. I had to leap over to keep 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).

10

The thematic content of Extract 2 shows how Mwazha combines elements of the apocalyptic and allegoric text genres. The metaphor of the gorge is used to summarise Mwazha's spiritual view of Rev. Wright's power and its potential to frustrate his ministry. However, the gorge also represents the division created in the church by Mwazha's spiritual practice, a division he blames on Rev. Wright's intransigence. Rev. Wright thus metaphorically embodies Mwazha's understanding of the challenge facing the Methodist church at that point in time. It is thus of the utmost importance that he overcomes Rev. Wright's oppositional stance and as promised earlier, Jesus does come "in His divine person" (*Part 1*: 65) to support Mwazha. 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. Overcoming the obstacle of the gorge therefore implies the defeat of Rev. Wright in Kwenda Circuit. Wright's subsequent right-about-turn and declaration of full support for Mwazha's practice – "The Reverend resignedly (sic) 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 therefore portrayed as the real life substitute for the gorge Mwazha and Jesus cross in the vision.

Linguistically, the main clauses of the first two sentences of Extract 2 – "I had a visionary dream that Monday night"; "I saw the Lord Jesus Christ" – locate the extract in the apocalyptic genre. All other verbs up to "I stayed on his trail" constitute the allegoric narrative of the extract, so that the apocalyptic frames the allegoric. Ideationally, the boundary is marked by the report "I woke up" (from the dream). Thus, Mwazha exits the apocalyptic allegory genre. What follows thereafter is Mwazha's conscious response to the revelation, in the form of verifiable facts.

Science fiction genre

Traces of the science fiction genre appear in Mwazha's accounts of several visions, such as the one in which he is ordained into the "divine priesthood" (*Part II*: 11). This genre is mostly reflected in the choice of certain processes and lexical items. Rhetorically, characteristics of the science fiction genre and its UFO discourse enhance the impression of Mwazha's divinity by portraying him as having access to the government of God's Kingdom. For instance, the vision in Extract 4 reveals the existence of God's administrative office:

> **Extract 3: 13.7.84** I had a vision while I was in Kadoma. I walked into the house of God's authority, the administrative centre of the divine kingship of our God

which was 500 metres in the sky. The office was round like a large globe that floated in the air. Once inside the globe, I saw young men in their early twenties who were busy and oblivious to movement around them. The men were totally engrossed in their work on books which were on the desks before them. I wanted to speak to them and so tried to get them to stop working. One of the lads spoke to me politely, "Father, it is not possible for us to stop working even for a very short moment. For if we dare to pause even briefly, there will be chaos on earth below, in the world in which you live in such like you never seen before. We must remain busy in order to avoid slip-ups, consequences of which we cannot contemplate." [...] God wished us to know that his guardianship for us took no break even for a brief pause (*Part II*: 64-65).

In Extract 3, science fiction manifests through images, such as the simile "round like a large globe" and the noun group "young men in their early twenties who were busy and oblivious to movement around them". Both phrases contain relative clauses with processes that flag the genre, such as

"that floated". The idea of working non-stop to avert cosmic disaster is itself a favourite of science fiction narratives. The vision in Extract 3 thus appears influenced by accounts of sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFO) or cinematographic renditions of alien technology such as spacecraft that are said to mysteriously appear to certain individuals and vanish just as mysteriously into thin air.

The technology alluded to in this vision – a spaceship in the form of a 'globe' floating in the air and filled with vigilant angels dedicated to the earth's security – is strongly reminiscent of the Star Wars movies, which were very popular in Zimbabwe in the eighties and nineties, era of the writing of the founding text. This vision also incorporates echoes of other Western discourse types, which constitute its immediate context. The most prominent of them is the geopolitical notion of a tenuous peace that was the Cold War, which could have been a major concern for Mwazha as reflected in the fact that this vision is located immediately after the one in which he intervenes to end the Cold War (*Part II*: 62) and occurs less than a month (on 13.7.84) after the Third World War vision (on 22.6.84).

The notion of God's security team analysing 'books' underscores Mwazha's belief in the Western value of literacy and a reading culture. This

is echoed in other visions such as the one in which he is "presented with a book listing the names of believers" (*Part II*: 23) and another in which "an archangel delivers a chart of names […] of denominations" (*Part II*: 65). It however also evokes apocalyptic discourse of 'Judgment Day' where the divine judge will use the 'Book of Life' to determine the fate of believers and non-believers alike. Mwazha's apocalyptic discourse, linked as it is to AIC Apostolic spiritual discourse that stresses the purity and righteousness required to be in the 'Book of Life', is therefore supported by an aspect of modern Western worldview so as to make AIC Apostolic spirituality relevant to the contemporary world. The angels' activity further evokes Mwazha's vision in which he stops the Third World War and effectively ushers in God's reign on earth[1]. The busy angels may thus be seen as using their 'books of life' to ensure the security of all believers at all times, thus underscoring AIC Apostolic spiritual conditioning of 'wellbeing' on personal holiness. Again, apparent contradiction between the notion of a post-Armageddon 'Judgment Day' and the claim to have prevented the ultimate world war reflects the paramountancy of Mwazha's pragmatic preoccupation with appealing to as diverse an audience as possible through his intertextual activity.

Mwazha's contention that the end of the world as we know it is now and that he represents the long-awaited advent of the Kingdom of God on earth is explicated through yet another vision couched in science fiction discourse:

> **Extract 4: 31.7.84** I was now living in Hatfield when I noticed a house, more like a palace, it [sic] was the dwelling place of the Lord God erected on the earth. I stepped up to it and went in to speak to the Chief Secretary in his office. I was excited with this divine assurance that the Divine House of God from where the Kingship reigns was now in Zimbabwe among us. Amen (*Part II*: 66).

Mwazha's anthropomorphic concept of God's 'palace' thus appears built on the notion of an alien craft coming to earth from an unknown part of the galaxy, a type of colonisation usually associated with stories of UFO or alien sightings. Indeed, Mwazha has previously used the terms "divine carrier" and "cloud-craft" (*Part 1*: 77) to describe the 'cloud' that served as Jesus' 'vehicle' on his imaginary tour of Africa. In this instance, Mwazha's imbuement with Western worldview is also underscored by use of the

13

discourse of public administration, such as the notion of a bureaucratic order, an office, and a 'Chief Secretary', which once again evokes Mwazha's appreciation of written records. Explicit interpretation of the location of God's 'palace' in Zimbabwe as signalling the arrival of the Kingdom of God in that country reflects desire for Mwazha, who has previously portrayed himself as belonging to the "Kingship of heaven" (*Part 1*: 60), to be seen as truly an influential member of the heavenly royal family.

Conclusion

Using intertextuality and interdiscursivity, this article has examined the generic constitution of Mwazha's founding text, *The Divine commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa*. The article has limited itself to discussing strategies used by Mwazha to blend characteristics of three genres – autobiography, allegory and science fiction – into his founding text. It has shown that these genres are like motifs woven individually or in various combinations onto a main fabric comprising Apostolic AIC spiritual discourse that often takes the generic form of apocalyptic narrative. Such a mix of disparate genres and discourses is unprecedented in AIC texts. It therefore suggests the emergence of a new genre.

Ultimately, whereas intertextuality and interdiscursivity have helped deconstruct the textual composition of a new genre, it has also pointed to the fallacy of the notion of ideological independence or originality in AIC discourses. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity have shown that the discursive reality of formerly colonised societies is a mutual influence at first skewed in favour of the voices of the colonial movement and later in favour of indigenous Black African voices. By the same token, intertextuality and interdiscursivity also expose the fallacy of foundational Western thinking with regards to African text types.

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15