African Christian discourse redefining identity, literature and language education in Southern Africa: the case of the founding text of Paul Mwazha's African Apostolic Church

by

Andrew Tichaenzana Manyawu*

Abstract

Being both a subject and a medium of learning in Southern African schools, language is the vehicle through which society may pass on its worldview to its youths. This raises questions of selection and grading of material to be incorporated into syllabi and textbooks. This paper argues that Southern African language syllabi need a paradigm shift in order to better serve an African society seeking to reaffirm its identity after decades of oppression. There is need to more aggressively open up language curriculum to texts and discourses widely consumed by Africans but hitherto ignored by formal educational systems still biased towards Western worldview. These texts include founding the discursive production of African Instituted Churches. One such text is examined from the perspective of intertextuality in order to illustrate its literary and educational value. A case is then made for the inclusion of such texts onto secondary school curricula in Southern Africa.

Key words: language education; discourse; AIC discourse; intertextuality; curriculum

Introduction

From generation to generation, societies strive to define language and characterise processes that facilitate its learning and acquisition. In the process, they continually redefine themselves since it is through language – a faculty for Saussure, and an institution according to Martinet – that we conceive reality (Martinet, 1970). The fact that societies define themselves as they define language renders the process of discovery both inevitable and perpetual and underscores the fact that human beings are the ultimate subjects of whatever thoughts they may have about objective reality. The material face of language, which is discourse manifested in text, amply reflects these dynamics. Texts will carry the genetic imprint of their societies of origin much as they will also cause those societies to evolve. The fact that primary and secondary school language education programmes in Southern Africa have up to now more or less ignored such discourses as that of African Instituted Church (AIC) despite the movement's massive impact on the African psyche and identity therefore warrants academic discussion.

The AIC movement in general and AIC of Zimbabwean origin in particular have experienced unparalleled success in terms of membership growth and socio-cultural impact, thus redefining the Southern African socio-cultural landscape. The term African Christianity (Amanze, 1998) actually derives from the existence of AICs. Zimbabwean AICs have a propensity to disregard national boundaries in their activities; quite a number of them have spread their wings regionally with some opening branches as far away as the UK, Nigeria and Australia. Besides Mwazha's AAC, examples of successful AICs include Johane Masowe and Johane Marange's African Apostolic Churches. AICs seem close to 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. It may thus not be usual to associate AICs with the modern Western electronic and print media that underpin Mwazha's communication strategies [a website (www.endtimemessage.org), a hymn book and a founding text]. Mwazha's recourse to Western technology in a church that still holds its services in the open (cf. www.endtimemessage.org) underscores the hybridity of his worldview. An overview of both website and founding text reveals a discourse characterised by a similar hybridity. This hybridity, characteristic of modern African culture,

* Mr.Andrew Tichaenzana Manyawu is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Language and Social Education at the National University of Lesotho.

merits not only examination by academics but also, and more significantly, the incorporation of the discourse into the language and literature syllabi of formal educational institutions in Southern Africa.

Literature and AIC discourse

While academics have started subjecting African religious discourse to literary analysis, junior and secondary school language and literature curricula are yet to consider treating African religious texts as discursive events worthy of students' attention. For instance, none of the English textbooks used in Lesotho Secondary Schools at Junior Certificate (JC) level, incorporates AIC discourse or any allusion to AICs.

To illustrate the literary qualities of AIC texts, this paper examines a specific discourse event: Part Two of Paul Mwazha's founding text, *Kutumwa kwa Paul Mwazha we Africa* (English version: "The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa"). First, Paul Mwazha, his church and his founding text are characterised. Then key analytical tools proposed for the study of such texts in schools are presented and applied to the text in question.

Genesis of Mwazha's text

According to Kalu (2005), AIC discourse is a response to white cultural dominance and power in the church. The broad context of Paul Mwazha's text is Zimbabwe from 1960 to the end of the 20th century – beginning with when it was still colonial Southern Rhodesia, through the years of the rebel Rhodesian regime and on to Independent Zimbabwe. This era is characterised by racial discrimination, Bantu political and cultural resistance, nationalist politics, an armed liberation struggle and Bantu nationalist government. It is also an era fraught with activity on the religious front as several leaders throughout Southern Africa respond to missionary teaching with most Zimbabwean AIC founders taking their inspiration mainly from South Africa. Ethiopianism and Zionism are quickly establishing themselves as the two movements most in vogue. In Zimbabwe, the AIC movement is spearheaded by such leaders as the two Johanes, Marange and Masowe as well as a woman, Mai Chaza of the Guta ra Jehova (the City of God) Church. Mwazha's followers, like those of Marange and Masowe before him, are easily identifiable thanks to distinctive hairstyles (bald heads and unshaven beards for men) and attire (flowing white gowns with headscarves for women). Mai Chaza went further to require her followers to adopt their religious uniforms (khaki shirts and shorts with leather belting similar to that of the British South African Police for men and white skirts and blouses for women) as daily accoutrement.

Current government policy and behaviour in Zimbabwe overtly encourages spirit-based knowledge systems. Parliament recently discarded from its statutes a so-called Anti-Witchcraft Act that criminalised claims and accusations of witchcraft. This act has been replaced by one which recognises and criminalises witchcraft itself (Vickers, 2006) thus legitimising and legalising African discourse of the supernatural. On a rather farcical note, several senior Government officials recently accepted as true a fraudulent *n'ganga*'s (healer-cum-diviner) claims of processed diesel purportedly supplied to the country by its ancestors, with one prominent Minister allegedly even consulting the same *n'ganga* about his prospects for becoming the country's next president (Marwizi, 2007). This appears to be fertile ground for a prophetic discourse affirming the dignity and integrity of the Bantu person before a Christian God introduced by means of a missionary discourse hostile to African worldview.

AAC founder and presumed author: Paul Mwazha

Part One of Mwazha's founding text provides relatively ample biographical data on him. According to it, Paul Mwazha is a 90 year old former school teacher, headmaster, and Methodist evangelist. He is of Shona descent but is particularly proud of the fact that his father had the distinction of having served as a high-ranking warrior in Ndebele King Lobengula's (son of Mzilikazi, Chaka's trusted general) army. His father having died early in the boy's life, Paul Mwazha has a poverty-stricken childhood. His academic ability and deep faith in God, however, soon earn him the sympathy and support of various school and

church authorities. From an early age, he sees God as a substitute for his deceased father, referring to Him as "my father". He strongly underscores the role played in his adolescence and young adulthood by white Methodist church and school authorities who quickly saw in him zeal for both academic and church work. The highlight of his academic achievements is a £11 bursary to study at a church-owned institution called Howard Mission in Mashonaland Central Province north of Harare where he graduates as the school's top student in Standard Six. As a result, he is given the opportunity to train as a teacher and Methodist evangelist. After his training, he goes on to work as a teacher-cum-evangelist in a number of Methodist Church circuits in Mashonaland Province. His work is, however soon shrouded in controversy as other church leaders begin complaining about his apparently eccentric approach to church work. Among some of the complaints about him are the following: during church services he claimed to be God himself speaking directly to the congregation; he made church members confess their sins during services; he held all-night revival meetings; and he claimed to have power to heal the sick and raise the dead. The Methodist Church's British leaders, however, stand by him and actually see in him a manifestation of God's gifts of prophecy and healing. As his popularity grows, so do the numbers of believers with personal allegiance to him. He claims that such followers soon encouraged him to form a new church for them so they could worship God freely since God was with him and not with the Methodist Church. Eventually, God appeared to him in two separate visions, once to name him Archbishop of Central Africa, which was non-Methodist discourse, and later to give him the name of his new church: the African Apostolic Church *(Vaapostora VeAFrica Church*).

God has reportedly spoken to Mwazha since his childhood, revealing several mysteries to him, all them building up to the formation of his own church. Incidentally, according to Zimbabwean Methodist folklore, in 1918, the year of Mwazha's birth, the Holy Spirit descended on Methodist believers in the country causing them to go all over the country preaching the Gospel, healing the sick and performing many other miracles, much as Mwazha was to do just two decades later. Mwazha launched his African Apostolic Church in 1959 in rural Zimbabwe at Guvambwa. Nineteen years earlier, at the age of 22 and at that very same place, he had had a vision and "was commissioned to be an apostle of the African continent" (Chitando, 2004: 15). His followers alternatively call him *Mutumwa* (my translation: God's Messenger) or *Mudzidzisi* (my translation: the Teacher). In Part Two of his founding text, Mwazha actually refers to himself as the "angel of Africa". Indeed, teaching seems to be his core business. A church itinerary entitled *"Mission yeMutumwa Paul Mwawha weAfrica"* (my translation: the Mission of the Messenger Paul Mwazha of Africa) shows that between 15 August and 26 October 2008 Mwazha will have visited three SADC countries (Angola, Botswana and Zimbabwe) and taught in a total of five localities in those countries. He is also the key attraction at gatherings such as annual pilgrimages to church's shrine at Guvambwa in Zimbabwe and Pentecost gatherings held at provincial level in Zimbabwe and throughout the rest of Southern Africa.

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.

Indeed, the concept of a new and prosperous Africa to rival other nations of the world is at the heart of Mwazha's visions throughout the two volumes of his founding text.

The text: "The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha"

The first volume of the founding text of the African Apostolic Church of Zimbabwe, *Kutumwa kwa Paul Mwazha we Africa* (English version: "The Divine Commission of Paul Mwazha of Africa") shows neither place nor date of publication. It was "compiled" by one Timothy Sunday Muriritirwa. It, however, is an account of events written in the first person in Mwazha's own voice. Part Two of the founding text was

published by the African Apostolic Church of Zimbabwe in 1994. The author's name is not given but once again the text is narrated in Mwazha's voice. While the first volume in Shona is not specifically called Part One, the second volume's title includes the extension "Part Two". This could indicate that the second volume was not planned for at the time the first one was written. Both volumes are translated into English and Ndebele, Zimbabwe's other national language. Authorship of the translations also remains anonymous.

Kutumwa kwa Paul Mwazha we Africa focuses on the spiritual gifts and works of the AAC's founder, Paul Mwazha, as a strategy to explain the origins of the church as well as characterise its place and function in African society. For the purposes of this discussion, the Shona version of the text is used. This is because the text's English version, an official translation of the Shona text, is in itself an intertextual discourse event that merits a separate study. This paper will limit itself to Part Two of Mwazha's founding text.

As the title stipulates, the major theme of the text is the "divine" commissioning of Paul Mwazha or the story of his spiritual journey. In Part Two, Mwazha narrates miracles he performed, his 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 ministry in Zimbabwe.

According to Part Two of the founding text, Mwazha's ministry and authority are mostly founded on the provision of concrete or 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 prays for barren couples causing them to conceive and have children, more people with similar existential problems seek him and subsequently join his church (Mwazha, 1994). 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 (idem). Mwazha seems to use these strategies to attain his 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 a missionary church since not enough African people would be likely to believe in the potency of his ministry to justify the formation of a new church.

This researcher has observed on three separate occasions that Mwazha's text seems to sell "like hot cakes". Around the dates of the church's major gatherings such as "Pentecost", the book vanishes from bookshop shelves while thousands more copies are sold at the gatherings. This could be one of the most reliable indications of the church's growth. It could also be evidence that Mwazha's text-based strategy may be working. To underscore the importance of the written text, the only 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.

It is significant that an African religious 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 Africans 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' testimony and behaviour underline the importance of these texts to their faith. Even though the African Apostolic Church teaches adherence to the Bible, believers tend to read first Mwazha's founding text and then the Bible, which they will read through hermeneutic tools incorporated into the founder's text.

Bantu worldview

The term Bantu is used to denote those peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa who refer to themselves through variations of the noun "*abantu*" [Nguni languages], "*batho*" [Sesotho] or "*vanhu*" [Shona]. The concept

of "*ubuntu*" (Nguni), *botho* (Sesotho) or "*hunhu*" (Shona) underpinning such pan-African movements as "African Renaissance" is derived from that noun. "*Ubuntu*" is a worldview common to most nations inhabiting countries starting from Cameroon to the Southern tip of Africa. While other worldviews may also be incorporated into Mwazha's text, Bantu worldview merits characterisation for a very important historical reason: abuse of the term "*bantu*" by apartheid and racist regimes in colonial South Africa and Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia, led to its rejection by some indigenous peoples of the region.

African Instituted Churches openly claim to convey Biblical teachings as understood "... in the context of their cultural belief system" (Amanze, 1998: 116), Even though Paul Mwazha's text does not explicitly mention Bantu culture, it admits salient elements of Bantu cosmology to such an extent that it could safely be termed "bantu-centric". This bantu-centric orientation mostly manifests itself through the emphasis he puts on the literal power of God as well as its transmission to him by means of a heavenly or supernatural anointing and commissioning portrayed as belonging to the realm of objective reality. For instance, Part One of the founding text narrates a vision in which God makes Mwazha spend two weeks in a deep and dark pool where he metamorphoses into God's messenger. This cult of water in the form of a sinister pool experience is reminiscent of a tradition associated with the initiation of *sangomas* whereby spiritual powers are transmitted to them by powerful supernatural creatures such as mermaids and, in the case of Thomas Mofolo's (1981) Chaka, a monstrous snake. Salient in such Bantu rituals is a sense of the power of the spirit world in general. Fernandez describes in these terms the conceptual conflict between Bwitists, a West African Bantu (Gabon/ Cameroon) religious movement, and missionary evangelists on the definition of faith in the Christian God:

> For these Bwitists… religion was not a matter of faith, of "belief in spite of" or "willing suspension of belief". It was a very pragmatic technique for understanding, predicting and controlling – in short a science or pre-science of hidden things. To believe in something despite lack of evidence or evidence to the contrary, which is the Western condition, was foreign to their attitudes. Fang had always had good evidence for their beliefs. That is why they gave up the ancestors when it became evident that Christian beliefs were more powerful (Fernandez, 1982: 281).

This observation holds true for Paul Mwazha's text which talks of the very tangible transformation prayer can cause in believers' circumstances. Mwazha (1994) actually claims to have been given power and authority to create things through prayer. One scholar puts it this way:

> In African thought all things visible and invisible have a life. Nothing can be termed inanimate because everything that is has the ability to affect the life of another being or thing, especially so, the life of man. Everything has some force, some power, which can be tapped to increase or decrease the life span of a man. These forces are organized into a hierarchy of interrelationships. Above all is God… then divinities, spirits, ancestors… then man, animals, vegetation and other forces each reinforcing the other. The reality of their existence consists in their ability to reinforce each other in their web of interaction (Talboid, 1979: 27-28).

Such a hierarchy of interrelationships is manifest in Mwazha's founding text. In this paper, Bantu worldview shall therefore be seen as belief in the existence of spiritual interrelationships between the individual believer, the spirit world, the spirits of other people and creatures, both living and dead, and God.

Discourse, Text and Intertextuality

The concept of discourse defines language as occurring in specific social contexts reflecting specific codes, expectations, ideological pressures and presuppositions. Thus, a given society and culture "... can be seen as built up of recognizable 'discursive practices', such as those used in educational, legal, religious or political contexts" (Allen, 2000: 211-212). This paper examines the discursive practices of the African Apostolic Church as they occur in Part Two of its founding text. Fairclough (2007) makes the theoretical claim that,

> … discourse has in many ways become a more salient and potent element of social life in the contemporary world, and that more general processes of current social change often seem to be initiated and driven by changes in discourse. Discourse analysis, including linguistic analysis, therefore has a great deal more to contribute to social research than has generally been recognised, especially when integrated into interdisciplinary research projects.

This view is significant in that it makes discourse the underlying force of a given society as well as its mirror thus signalling the need for broader and more inclusive curriculum choices in Southern Africa.

Allen (2000) defines text as "… whatever meaning is generated by the intertextual relations between one text and another and the activation of those relations by a reader" (p. 220). Intertextuality is a term first coined by Julia Kristeva as she examined Bakhtin's ideas of textual analysis. According to her, "Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations and is the absorption and transformation of another" (Kristeva, 1980: 15). Other scholars who have developed various aspects of the concept include Gérard Gennette, Roland Barthes and Norman Fairclough. Intertextuality is concerned with the processes involved in producing messages or texts in verbal or written form. In text analysis, linguistic analysis and intertextuality are viewed as not only related but also inseparable (Bakhtin, 1986). Fairclough (1995) adds: "... intertextual analysis draws attention to the dependence of texts upon society and history in the form of the resources made available within the order of discourse (genres, discourses, etc.)" (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 188-189).

Intertextuality therefore refers to the various connections between texts (statements, utterances). These connections occur over time as well as synchronically within repertoires. Every text displays intertextual links with previous (similar or related) texts as well as synchronically with related texts (Blommaert, 2005). Kristeva relates the concept more clearly to society, by suggesting that intertextuality 'inserts the history into the text' and 'inserts the text into history' (Fairclough, 1992). Intertextuality can be viewed as comprising the following:

- explicit intertextuality or the incorporation of the actual words or explicit citation or quotation of other texts in Mwazha's text (Fairclough, 1992);
- implicit intertextuality (where no textual markers are used to locate the incorporated text); and
- interdiscursivity (incorporation of other discourses or voices into a given text).

Interdiscursivity is closely related to intertextuality. Barthes (1970) is one of the first to develop this notion. "Latéralement à chaque énoncé on dirait que des voix *off* se font entendre" (Our translation: We could say that voice-overs are heard in conjunction to each utterance.) (Barthes, 1970: 28). Fairclough (1995) defines interdiscursivity as the incorporation of other discourses or voices into a text. He traces this concept to Kristeva's (1980) notion of intertextuality. "The concept of interdiscursivity highlights the normal heterogeneity of texts in being constituted by combinations of diverse genres and discourses" (Fairclough, 1995: 134).

Mwazha's text symbolically and strategically locates him in a mediatory role between Bantu and Western cultures, as well as between Bantu and Judeo-Christian cosmologies. Several voices are thus necessarily infused into his text making its meaning potentially ambivalent. This study shall take interdiscursivity to mean the incorporation into the text of these "voices" signalled by the use of characteristic vocabulary and style or register ("traces") of a given discourse.

Subsumed in the concept of interdiscursivity are hybridity (mixing of genres) and "multivalence" (Barthes, 1970) or ambivalence (the ensuing ability to have more than one signified). Mwazha's text incorporates a significant number of voices (and languages). It will be interesting to see how and to what effect he does so.

This discussion will limit itself to explicit intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

1. The interdiscursivity of Mwazha's founding text

1.1 The biographical voice in Mwazha's text

While *Kutumwa kwa Paul Mwazha we Africa* Parts One and Two explains the origin of the church, it is so focussed on the person of the church's founder – Paul Mwazha – that it could also be taken for his autobiography. Most of the book's chapters are written in the style of the diary, documenting events that occurred in Mwazha's life between 1960 and 1991. The most important strategy is the use of temporal location markers such as dates.

1.2 Vague temporal location

Mwazha uses vague temporal markers such as *mumwe musi* (one day), *mangwana* (tomorrow), and *mauro* (in the evening) (p. 2) to situate his voice. This vagueness is limited to recollections of the very first miracles he performed. While all three markers appear in Mwazha's voice, this voice is split into two: *mumwe musi* and *mauro* are in the narrator's voice while *mangwana* appears in a quotation of Mwazha by the narrator. The significance of Mwazha's dual roles as narrator and character are further examined below in the section on the intertextual use of quotations.

Such vagueness is reminiscent of texts of the Gospels where all of Jesus' miraculous acts are vaguely situated in time as in this example: "One Sabbath Jesus was teaching in a synagogue. A woman there had an evil spirit that had made her ill for eighteen years…" (Luke 13: 10 – 11). It is also a favorite strategy of Jesus' parables, which are a form of fiction: "There was once a man who had land which bore good crops" (Luke 12: 16).

One can therefore discern a vocal hybridity comprising up to five voices: Mwazha, the Bible, the diary and fiction. Sections of the text using this strategy (reports of Mwazha's first miracles) thus have potential to be interpreted in four different ways. They can be seen as mere stories to encourage believers, factual reports of quasi-Biblical acts and/ or biographical details of Mwazha's exploits. Combining the four renders the strategy potent in that the audience is attracted by the storyteller's charisma, humbled by echoes of the Biblical miracles and awed by the location of all these things in Mwazha's life.

1.3 Verb tenses as temporal markers

The use of this strategy appears to be most significant in reports of miracles performed by the author. There is juxtaposition of past and present tenses as in this example: "*Uyu Tsitsi wakaroorwa, watowawo navana vake… Ndivo vatendi vakatanga kudzimirwa muterera nezita raJesu, musangano raVaapostora veAfrica. Naizvozvo vose varikuuya nezvikumbiro zvorudzi irworwu, vari kubatsirwa naMweya Mutsvene*" (my translation: Tsitsi got married, she now has her own child… these are the first believers whose problem of still-births was stopped by the name of Jesus, in the AAC) (p. 3).

The effect of the two tenses juxtaposed in the same utterance is to sharpen the contrast between a past undesirable state and the new one obtained through Mwazha's miraculous intervention. The strategy paints a quick but vivid picture of the subject's life, capturing it in two sharp strokes, one of gloomy despair and another of joyous triumph. It is the picture of complete, absolute and instant transformation. Such transformation is the very goal and promise of Mwazha's ministry as evidenced by this statement: "*Vazhinji vaiva nomuterera navakanga vasingabereki vakatendeukira kuna Mwari vakabatsirwa vose naMweya Mutswenve*" (my translation: many who had the curse of still-born infants and those who were childless turned to God and were all helped by the Holy Spirit) (p. 4).

Bantu worldview holds that existential problems are the work of evil spirits sent by enemies. These evil spirits gain access to human beings whose relations with their ancestral spirits are bad. The belief is that such manifestations of evil spirits can be stopped instantaneously

once the subject's ancestral spirits are once again at peace with him/her. According to Rakotsoane (2000: 69), "In many parts of Lesotho people still associate their success or failure in life with their healthy or unhealthy relationship with ancestors". Mwazha's use of temporal markers to show an instantaneous healing can be viewed as emanating from such a worldview.

This strategy also reflects interdiscursive links with Biblical miracles. Most, if not all, Biblical miracles, especially those performed by Jesus, are based on the concept of complete and instantaneous reversal of adversity once a connection with God is established. An emblematic example of the need for such a connection is the report of the woman who had bled for twelve years who "… said to herself, 'If only I touch his cloak, I will get well.' Jesus… said, 'Courage, my daughter! Your faith has made you well'" (Matthew 9: 20 – 22). Once again Mwazha resorts to a strategy that mirrors both Bantu and Biblical worldviews.

1.4 Specific temporal location

The discourse of the diary is best illustrated by the use of specific temporal markers in the form of dates. Five dates occur in the first 8 chapters (pp. 1-10) of Part Two of Mwazha's text. Three of these are references to years such as "*muna* 1972" (my translation: in 1972) (p. 8) while the other two specify the day of the week, date, month and year, eg. "*NoMusi weChipiri,* May 10, 1960" (my translation: On Tuesday, May 10, 1960) (p. 2). In this part of the text dates appear in the text as clauses within sentences. These first chapters therefore do not give prominence to the style of the diary. Chapters 9 to 13 (pp. 10 – 62), however, make peculiar use of dates. These four chapters constitute the bulk of Mwazha's story. In this part of the text, sections are systematically sub-headed and dated. The same dating format is used throughout the four chapters. The format is digital and records the day, the month and the year, eg. "19.1.65" (p. 11). There are 143 such occurrences in the said four chapters of the book. While most dates denote a single day, some cover a range of days, eg. 25.5.89 – 28.5.89 (p. 57). The use of dates at the beginning of sections places a chronological mark on the text's contents. There is thus a serious effort to couch Mwazha's voice in the discourse of the Western calendar.

Such marking of time is not a common feature of traditional Bantu discourse, neither is it Biblical. The audience may tend to associate it with Western education, a highly valued attribute in both colonial Rhodesia and independent Zimbabwe. Salient in the use of dates is the dominant Western culture of the coloniser now adopted by prosperous Bantu elites. This strategy therefore lends secular authority to Mwazha's voice. The numbers marking time may symbolise enlightenment, both secular and spiritual, marching through the years. This perception of secular and spiritual systems as being inseparable is typical of Bantu worldview which holds that every person and material object has both natural and spiritual natures (Rakotsoane, 2000). While the Bantu person embraces Western technological advancement, the spiritual side of his/her being must continue to feel connected to a powerful benevolent spirit body that has a tangible impact on the individual's existential needs. Use of temporal markers thus reflects the ambivalence of Mwazha's text. The message is at once secular, Biblical, spiritual and personal.

1.5 Biblical discourse

While the discourse of the diary marks arrangement into sections, the content of each section is further arranged in the style of the Bible (chapters, verses and sub-topics for sections). Biblical echoes tone down the voice of the diary resulting in a text that uses autobiographical strategies to form an argument to convince the audience about one man's supernatural transformation into a divine being, the "angel of Africa, the only Ernest Paul Mwazha in Southern Rhodesia" (Mwazha, 1994: 12), one worthy to be followed by the continent of Africa. The idea is to draw people not to an abstract religious institution but to a divinely appointed individual, a saviour who forms a church to use as a tool in accomplishing his mission. Thus a perception of Mwazha as a Black Messiah is likely to emerge from the text. The concept of Black Messiah is typical of AIC discourse originating in Zimbabwe, a country "... where colonialism had its greatest impact..."

(Amanze, 1998: 114) and somewhat alienated the Bantu person from a Jesus Christ seen as a "white Messiah".

2. Explicit intertextuality in Mwazha's text

Part Two of Mwazha's founding text makes copious use of explicit intertextuality. It uses quotation to incorporate numerous other texts and voices.

7.1 Quotations from the Bible

Mwazha virtually encapsulates his voice (and those of the other characters whose voices are incorporated into the text) between thick layers of direct quotations from the Bible. Raw Biblical text forms a robust buffer zone both at the beginning and at the end of the text. An unnumbered page precedes the text's first chapter. This page appears to be some sort of prelude. It reiterates the book's title followed by six quotations from the Bible, five of which are from the Old Testament. All verses contain a reference to people coming or turning to God. Some examples of nominal groups used to describe these people are "*ndudzi dzose*" (my translation: all nations); "*vanhu vaifamba murima*" (those who were walking in darkness); and "*vanakomana vavanhu*" (sons of men). In every quoted verse, the people referred to have, in one way or the other, an unacceptable relationship with God. The nominal phrases used tend to be all-encompassing. They are, in fact, references to humanity in general. All verses quoted on this page are therefore concerned with mankind turning to God, by implication through Mwazha.

A prophetic voice features in all six verses. An example is: "*Marudzi achauya kuchiedza chako, madzimambo kukubwinya kwako*" [Good News Study Bible (1994, Isaiah 60:3) translation: "Nations will come to your light, and kings to the dawning of your new day"]. The use of the second person (*chiedza* <u>*chako*</u> – <u>your</u> light – and *kubwinya* <u>*kwako*</u> – <u>your</u> new day) in four of the verses suggests a dialogue between God's voice (through the prophets) and an unidentified interlocutor. Since the text in which the verses appear is about Paul Mwazha, the audience is thus prompted to assume that God is addressing Mwazha, as He actually does further on in the text. The preponderance of Old Testament (OT) prophetic voices announcing a saviour is reminiscent of New Testament (NT) use of the OT to portray Jesus as the promised Messiah. It is a clue of the extent of Mwazha's commission (or ambition) – to be a Messiah.

The text's last chapter entitled "*Bhaibheri ishoko raMwari*" (p. 62) (my translation: the Bible is God's word) is about the Bible. Its 24 pages contain a whopping 308 quotations (13 per page on average) from the Bible. Every one of the verses quoted develops a point Mwazha wishes to make about the Bible and its place in believers' lives. Through extensive use of quotations, the Bible appears to reflect upon and define itself. It is the voice of God (Mwazha calls it the Word of God) reaching out to the audience in direct speech to teach them about itself. This thematic interest in the Bible may seem odd in a text concerned with Mwazha's commissioning. It, however, could be a symbolic way of persuading the audience that Mwazha's commissioning is Biblical. It definitely does stress the claim that Mwazha's teaching is Biblical, something that he himself spells out to a rival (p. 21).

This dual layer of Biblical text is like armour protecting Mwazha's voice from doubt and criticism. While the preamble of Biblical verses prepares the audience for events they are to encounter through Mwazha's voice, the final layer persuades the audience to swallow wholesale the content delivered by Mwazha's voice. The Bible thus gives Mwazha's voice an aura of infallibility leaving no room for alternative thinking. This might signal an intention to make Mwazha's voice appear to be an extension of the Bible perceived as God's Word.

7.2 Quotations of Biblical spiritual characters

In the body of the text, copious use is made of quotations of spiritual figures originating in the Bible. The Holy Spirit's voice is heard many times. He can give detailed instructions to Mwazha on how to handle believers' supplications. For instance, after praying on Chirasauta Mountain, the Holy Spirit intervenes: "*Mweya Mutsvene akati kwandiri, 'Vataurire kuti chichemo chavo*

chadavirwa naMwari. Muterera wabviswa nhasi. Vachabereka vana vanorarama. Wokutanga achange ari musikana, zita rake richanzi Tsitsi nokuti vanzwirwa tsitsi naMwari" (p. 2). (My translation: The Holy Spirit said to me, "Tell them that their supplication has been answered by God. The curse of stillbirths has been removed today. They will have babies that live. The first one will be a girl whose name shall be Tsitsi (mercy) because God has felt mercy for them".)

The Holy Spirit talks *to* (not *with*) Mwazha. Mwazha perceives it as a person: he uses the third person subject pronoun "*a*" (in "*akati*") which means him/her and cannot normally be used to designate inanimate objects or animals.

The Holy Spirit gives Mwazha two instructions. The first is in the imperative mode (tell them) while the other (to name the child Tsitsi) is subsumed in an affirmation in the last sentence of the quotation. The overarching speech act is an order to inform, to "tell" believers something. This confirms Mwazha's role as mediator between God and mankind, that is to say God's messenger or, as he calls himself, the "angel of Africa" (1994:12). Whenever the Holy Spirit intervenes in this founding text, it is to tell Mwazha what to say to those seeking divine intervention in their affairs. In fact, Mwazha sees himself as no more than a medium. After conveying the Holy Spirit's message to the supplicating couple, he reports that they went on to have a baby girl and named her Tsitsi *in accordance with what the Holy Spirit had told them* ("*... sezvavakanga vaudzwa naMweya Mutsvene*"; pp. 2 – 3). It must be emphasised that Mwazha does not *dialogue* with the Holy Spirit. He simply takes the Holy Spirit's orders and carries them out. Quotation is thus a powerful metaphor of Mwazha's status as a "*Mutumwa*", a messenger, an instrument of the will of God. This strategy also reveals to the audience the identity of Mwazha's master – the one who sends him – and confirms his status as a prophet or oracle, a key attribute of the Southern African AIC leader (Amanze, 1998).

The only quotation of Jesus in Part Two of the founding text (page 35) portrays him as the supreme teacher, the one who explains existential mysteries. It is incorporated in a short binary exchange in which Mwazha asks Jesus why temptations are growing in number in today's world. Jesus answers that all these things are happening so that God's true people who fear Him and obey all His commandments may be known and that they may enter His kingdom as holy people. Mwazha thus appears to use Christ's voice to announce his theological agenda, the end time message, which teaches that the end of the world is imminent (http://endtimemessage.org/PictureGallery.html).

It is significant that of the three persons of the Holy Trinity, Mwazha only quotes the Holy Spirit and Jesus in Part Two of his text. God's answers to prayers are conveyed to Mwazha by the Holy Spirit while Jesus appears to serve as a reference to understand God's will and ways. Even though Mwazha's conception of the Christian deity is not the subject of this discussion, it would be interesting to examine it from a discursive perspective in a separate study.

Mwazha also quotes angels called "*vatumwa*" (messengers or angels). Whereas he does not engage in arguments with the Holy Spirit, he can negotiate with "*Mutumwa mukuru*" (p. 7) (my translation: the Archangel). The negotiations – over Mwazha's heavenly anointing as a priest – are in direct speech. A female angel tells Mwazha that he cannot be anointed on that particular day because the necessary altar has not yet been built. Mwazha refuses to depart without his anointing, arguing that it is difficult to enter the heavenly temple where they are. The contention continues for some time. Eventually, the male archangel enters the scene and, after listening to Mwazha's concerns, orders the female angel to anoint Mwazha "*ipapo pachazovakwa Aritari*" (p.7), meaning on the very spot chosen for the construction of the altar.

The incorporation of angelic voices casts Mwazha as the foundation of the African church, its patriarch, so to speak. His authority to negotiate with and his ability to persuade angels put him on an equal footing with them. It confirms his status as God's messenger (*mutumwa*),

which, as we have seen, is another word for angel. Quoting this exchange with and between angels persuades the audience to accept his self-designation as the "Angel of Africa" (p. 12).

Another spiritual authority quoted by Mwazha is called "*Inzwi*"/ "*Izwi*" (pp. 6; 15) (the Voice or the Word); "*Izwi roUsingaonwi"* (p. 16) (the voice/ word of the Invisible One); "*Izwi raIshe wapasi rose*" (p.16) (the voice/ word of the Lord/ King of the whole earth), or "*Shoko roUsingaonwi*" (p. 16) (the Word of the Invisible One). This voice speaks in fragmented terms. For instance, (p. 6) "*Ndarikure*" (the name of a shrine) or "The Holy Sabbath of the Lord" (p. 16) (in English in the text). It is not clear from whom the voice emanates since in Biblical discourse the noun "*Ishe*" (Lord or King) can refer either to God or Jesus. Biblical discourse does, however, denote Jesus as the Word (John 1). Verbal messages from "*Izwi*" to Mwazha may thus mean that God communicates directly to Mwazha through God's Word (or voice), which is Jesus Christ. The fragmented nature of this character's discourse may be intended to distinguish it from all other voices quoted by making it appear to be enigmatic and having a meaning accessible only to Mwazha, God's chosen angel to Africa.

7.3 Quotation of non-Biblical spiritual characters

As he is "flying" towards the east ("*ndakabhururuka ndichienda mabvazuva*") (p. 12), Mwazha meets an old white woman and her daughter. This woman asks him in Shona, "*Ko iwe unombova aniko, uye basa rako rinombova reiko?*" (my translation: Who are you and what is your job/ role?). He answers: *"I am the angel of Africa, the only Ernest Paul Mwazha in Southern Rhodesia"* (in English and in italics in the text). This title is the ultimate revelation of his status, power, authority and licence to appear and operate in the spiritual and/ or heavenly realm on behalf of Africa and in the interest of Africa.

It is significant that Mwazha reveals his "divine" identity, the climax of the story of his commission, to white women. First, this encounter with two white women echoes the story of Jesus' resurrection when two women met "an angel of the Lord" dressed in white like Mwazha does throughout the bulk of his text (Matthew 28: 1-5). The choice of women interlocutors also seems to underscore a thematic tendency of Mwazha's text: the existential needs he attends to (still births and sterility) are common concerns of Bantu women in Zimbabwe. The white race of the women could be meant to reflect Mwazha's notion of the heavenly race given that all his angels, his Jesus and other heavenly beings have Caucasian racial traits. Populating the heavens with women angels (the only male heavenly beings in the text are those above the rank of angel, from archangel upwards) could be a metaphorical attempt to impose himself as the sole legitimate Christian patriarch of Africa. Ultimately, revealing his divine identity to women evokes the image of Christ whose resurrection is also first witnessed by women.

7.4 Quotation of church leaders

The very first miracle reported by Mwazha in Part Two of his text happens because of *Mufundisi* J. Chikawa's belief in Mwazha's power. The title *Mufundisi* is ordinarily reserved for ordained ministers in missionary-initiated churches. While this title is systematically used to refer to Mwazha's pastors, it is not used to refer to the founder himself. Chikawa, a member of Mwazha's church and a character often cited in the text, is quoted as saying, "*Ndauya nomurme uyu nomukadzi wake... vano muterera*" (p. 2) (my translation: I have brought this man and his wife... they have the curse of stillbirths). When Mwazha asks Chikawa what he wants him (Mwazha) to do, the latter answers, "*A, munhu waMwari, ndauya navo kuti muvakumbirire kuna Mwari wenyu kuti vabereke vana vanorarama*" (p. 2) (my translation: Ah, man of God, I have brought them so that you may intercede for them to your God to let them have children who live). Chikawa's text underscores Mwazha's superiority to his subordinate pastors: only the Archbishop (Mwazha) can miraculously address existential needs and problems through prayer. A kind of spiritual hierarchy evocative of the relationship between Jesus and his disciples thus emerges in the African

Apostolic Church of Zimbabwe. Such a link to New Testament culture is significant in that it contributes to a characterisation of the AIC concept of a "Black Jesus" (Amanze, 1998).

The leader of a rival Christian movement is quoted as saying to Mwazha, "*Seiko uchidzidzisa shoko raMwari nenzira inosiyana neyatinodzidzisa nayo isu?*" (p. 21) (my translation: Why do you teach the word of God in a way that differs from ours?). Unlike *Mufundisi* Chikawa, neither this leader nor his church is named. Mwazha's intention may be to cast this leader's voice as being symbolic of the attitude of Mwazha's rivals, both AIC and non-AIC. The rival church leader's question connotes not just curious interest but also envy. It also contains insinuations of heresy. Mwazha senses this and replies that while other leaders teach in their own way, he tries to teach in accordance with the Word of God (p. 21). The tension in this exchange adds drama to the text.

Juxtaposition is thus used to show that while Mwazha's disciples, represented by Chikawa, come to seek 'life', rivals seek to attack and destroy the 'life-giving' ministry. This echoes Jesus' warning to know the difference between the shepherd who would lay down his life for his flock and the thief who comes only to steal, kill and destroy (John 10). In either case, the speech acts (request for assistance and questioning) of both Chikawa and the anonymous church leader connote their inferiority to Mwazha. Much as their attitudes to Mwazha are different (respect for on and open hostility for the other), the two men are to be perceived as being weak and not worth following. While Chikawa's case may be a metaphoric warning to Mwazha's believers and pastors alike to always seek the founder's intervention, the rival church leader is used intertextually to trash the reputations of rival movements.

3. Conclusion of analysis

This paper has dwelt exclusively on explicit intertextuality in Part Two of the founding text of Paul Mwazha's African Apostolic Church. It has attempted to characterise the message of Mwazha's text by examining his extensive use of quotation. Quotation structures the text into a prologue comprising Biblical texts, a body dominated by Mwazha'a voice and an epilogue consisting of more Biblical texts. Quoted voices support Mwazha's voice by providing a vivid context for his extra-terrestrial experiences and supernatural powers. Voices of spirit beings firmly place Mwazha in the presence of God, in heaven or simply in a supernatural realm. Quotation brings to life both known and anonymous characters thus confounding boundaries between the natural and supernatural realms. It is significant that all voices quoted are, in one way or the other, religious: they are human church leaders and believers (witnesses of Mwazha's anointing) or key spiritual actors of the Christian faith. It is an astute vocal hybridity that exploits religious authority to the maximum (enablers of the anointing). The text's persuasive force seems to reside in the fact that a properly conditioned Bantu audience is likely to be accustomed to and to need to be addressed directly by voices of spirits speaking through an "anointed" human "vessel".

From an interdiscursive perspective, Mwazha's text may be viewed as an onion. The outer layers of the onion consist of raw Biblical text. The inner layers incorporate human voices while the core contains heavenly ones, all witnesses of Mwazha's divine commission. While Mwazha's voice is present throughout, it is significant that its intensity grows progressively, building to a crescendo as one moves from the text's edges to its centre. There it appears to nestle in the security of the onion's outer layers and there it proclaims its fundamental message: Mwazha is God's Messiah (Amanze, 1998) to Africa.

4. Suggestions for language curricula in Southern Africa

Southern African curriculum developers as well as teachers need to look beyond the usual paradigms derived from Western civilisation in order to produce a more Afro-centric literature

curriculum that captures the creative usage of discourse and texts by Africans within African settings to cater for African needs. At the moment, Southern African English syllabi's views of literature tend to be narrow and fail to reflect reality in terms of discourses existing in the various countries of the region. For instance, while Lesotho's JC English syllabus recognises the fact that "the introduction of literary works in this syllabus should start as early as Form A (to) rekindle the waning reading culture", it defines literature as constituting four genres: the novel, drama, poetry and short stories (Lesotho Secondary Schools English Syllabus: Forms A-C: 14). Despite the fact that many Basotho and indeed Southern African youths are likely to frequently and regularly read founding texts such as the one examined in this paper, such literature is ignored by the syllabus.

AIC literature such as founding texts reflects a new hybrid genre that language learners need to discover and explore. Incorporation of such texts into school curricula is warranted first by their status and impact in African societies. Secondly, such incorporation is warranted by the fact that it will demystify literature and lead to a reaffirmation of traditional African literary genres in an era dominated by a quest for the reaffirmation of the African identity and African value systems.

The first strategy to adopt is to incorporate excerpts of texts such the one examined in this paper into language textbooks where they can serve as contextualisation and comprehension passages. They can be used to diversify and broaden the scope of situations of communication which form the basis of language teaching/ learning experiences in communicative approaches. Effective implementation of this idea will lead to a more complete attainment of the language class's ultimate goal of teaching discourse or language as it is used in Southern Africa. Full texts can then be subjected to more rigorous study in literature classes.

It may, however, be very reasonably argued that texts such as Mwazha's are objectionable for at least two reasons: that studying them in formal education settings may be viewed as infringing upon learners' freedom of religion and that their purpose and foci are too narrow to be viewed as literature. Such arguments, however, have the propensity to ignore the very essence of Bantu outlook or worldview, which in essence makes no distinction between the spiritual and secular or objective realms. Incorporating such texts into formal literature curricula would therefore serve as a strategy for affirming Bantu identity. If democracy is to take root in the region, the content of education must first be democratised to reflect the true nature of society. Indeed, university researchers are already studying them as part of advanced literary studies at institutions such as the National University of Lesotho.

Intertextuality also needs to be adopted as a major analytical tool in Southern African schools. Its liberating nature (the analyst needs no longer be ashamed of his subjectivity) is in sync with the region's quest for the democratic ideal. It is also more apt than other perspectives to reveal the hybridity that is the most fundamental feature of modern African society and literature. The greatest value of intertextuality for the language and literature student may, however, lie in the concept's dependence on the text analyst or student's general culture. By general culture is primarily meant the number of discourses, texts and works to which the student or analyst has been exposed prior to reading the text in question. The wider the student's reading culture, the more s/he is able to notice intertextual links embedded in the text under scrutiny. This is especially so in the case of implicit and interdiscursive intertextuality. An intertextual perspective, therefore, provides intrinsic motivation to read and research widely, thus providing a crucial solution to the key educational challenge to develop the reading culture or advanced literacy of learners (Manyawu, 2005).

References

Good News Study Bible: Discovering the message and its meaning (1994). Swindon: The Bible Societies/ Harper Collins.

Allen, G. (2000). *Intertextuality*. London: Routledge.

Amanze, J. N. (1998). *African Christianity in Botswana.* Gweru: Mambo Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. Austin: University of Texas.

Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: a critical introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chitando, E. (2003) "The Recreation of Africa: a study of the ideology of the African Apostolic Church of Zimbabwe". *Exchange Vol. 32 No. 3*, pp. 117-132.

Dunton, C. (2003). "Pixley KaIsaka Seme and the African Renaissance debate". *African Affairs*, pp. 555-573.

Dunton, C. (2007). "Return to Sender, Do Not Repeat Order: Nicolas Sarkozy's Speech at the University of Dakar". *The Ponal Magazine Gboungboun,* 1 (2). Retrieved December 12, 2007 from http://www.projectponal.com/newsletter/commentary/commentary Dunton1.html

Evans, C. A. (1996). "The Historical Jesus and the deified Christ: how did the one lead to the other?". In *The Nature of religious language: a colloquium*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, pp. 47-67.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: the critical study of language*, London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2007). "Emeritus Professor Norman Fairclough". *Norman Fairclough – Linguistics and English Language, Lancaster University*. Retrieved December 10, 2007 from http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/profiles/263/

Fernandez, J. W. (1982). *Bwiti: an ethnography of the religious imagination in Africa*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Genette, G. (1982). *Palimpsests: literature in the second degree*, Paris: Editions du Seuil.

Hebel, U.J. (1989). *Intertextuality, allusion and quotation: an international bibliography of critical studies*, New York: Greenwood Press.

Kalu, O. (2005). "Pentecostalism, media and cultural discourse in Africa". Retrieved on August 27, 2007 from http://www.whrnet.org/fundamentalisms/docs

Kristeva, J. (1980). *Desire in language*, New York: Colombia University Press.

Lesotho Secondary Schools English Syllabus: Forms A-C (undated, unpublished official document).

Love, A. (2000). "Democratic discourse? Realising alternatives in Zimbabwean political discourse". *Zambezia*, XXVII, Harare : University of Zimbabwe, pp. 27-45.

Manyawu, A.T. (2005). " La culture de l'écrit chez les jeunes Zimbabwéens noirs. Le cas des étudiants de 1ère année à l'Africa University". *Synergies Afrique Australe,* 01. Cape Town: University of Cape Town. Retrieved October 20, 2007 from http://fle.asso.free.fr/GERFLINT/afrique_australe1.htm

Marwizi, W. (20 October 2007). "Mutasa linked to bizarre rituals". *The Zimbabwe Situation*, www.thezimbabwesituation.com. Retrieved on 20th October 2007.

Mawondo, S.Z. (2006). "Villagers in the city: re-examining the African sense of persons and community". *BOLESWA occasional papers in Theology: tradition and modernity; proceedings of the BOLESWA conference held at the National University of Lesotho*, Roma: NUL, pp. 12-20.

Maxwell, D. (2006). *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational religious movement*, Oxford: James Currey.

Mofolo, T. (1981). *Chaka: a new translation by Daniel P. Kunene of the famous novel*, Oxford: Heinemann.

Mwazha, E.P. (1994). *Kutumwa kwaPaul Mwazha weAfrica chikamu chechipiri (The Divine commission of Paul Mwazha Part Two)*, Harare: African Apostolic Church of Zimbabwe.

"Mwazha video library". Retrieved November 26, 2007 from www.endtimemessage.org

Nthoi, L. (2000). "The Place of women in the Mwali cult: focus on leadership disputes at Njelele Shrine". *BOLESWA occasional papers in theology and religion: religion and gender*, Roma: National University of Lesotho.

Rakotsoane, F.C.L. (2000). "The Impact of Basotho cultural beliefs on sustainable crop production in Lesotho". *Review of Southern African Studies: a multidisciplinary journal of the arts, social and behavioural sciences*, 4 (2), pp. 66-77, Roma: ISAS.

Stubbs, M. (1996). *Text and corpus analysis*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Van Dijk, T.A. (1996). "Editorial: Discourse, cognition and society". *Discourse and society: an international journal for the study of discourse and communication in their social, political and cultural contexts*, 7 (1), Sage Publications, pp. 5 –6.

Vickers, S. (2006). "Witchcraft ban ends in Zimbabwe". *BBC News*. Retrieved January 30, 2008 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5134244.stm