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## ABSTRACT

This article presents Paul Ricœur's hermeneutic of the productive imagination as a methodological tool for understanding the innovative social function of texts that in exceeding their semantic meaning, iconically augment reality. Through the reasoning of Rastafari elder Mortimo Planno's unpublished text, *Rastafarian: The Earth's Most Strangest Man*, and the religious and biblical signification from the music of his most famous postulate, Bob Marley, this article applies Paul Ricœur's schema of the religious productive imagination to conceptualize the metaphoric transfer from text to life of verbal and iconic images of Rastafari's hermeneutic of word, sound and power. This transformation is accomplished through what Ricœur terms the phenomenology of the iconic augmentation of reality. Understanding this semantic innovation is critical to understanding the capacity of the religious imagination to transform reality as a proclamation of hope in the midst of despair.

Under the sign of this ultimate incognito of forgiveness, an echo can be heard of the word of wisdom uttered in the Song of Songs: "Love is as strong as death." The reserve of forgetting, I would then say, is as strong as the forgetting through effacement.[1]

If you know your history,
Then you would know where you coming from,
Then you wouldn't have to ask me,
Who the 'eck do I think I am.[2]

## Introduction[3]

For many, Rastafari conjures images of ganja smoking, dreadlocks, Bob Marley, and reggae rhythms. While there is some truth in these images, for many, this is as far as their journey with Rastafari goes. Rastafari's importance to Jamaica and the world has been acknowledged by scholars such as Rex Nettleford, who argues "[Rastafari is] one

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[1]Ricœur, *Memory, History*, 506.
[2]Marley, 'Buffalo Soldier'.
[3]This article is in part revised and reproduced with permission from "Re-Imagining Text – Re-Imagining Hermeneutics," *Postscripts: The Journal of Sacred Texts and Contemporary Worlds* 7, no. 1 (2011). © Equinox Publishing Ltd 2013. doi:10.1558/post.v7i1.87

of the most significant phenomena to emerge out of the modern history and sociology of Plantation America, that New World culturesphere of which Jamaica and the Caribbean are a part."[4] Theologian Jürgen Moltmann identifies Rastafari as "one of the most interesting modern forms of expression of the 'religion of the oppressed'." In developing their "own underground culture, a counter-culture to the culture of the white rulers," Rastafari has transformed the dominant language of oppression into a counter language of liberation and converted the dominant religious symbols of Babylon into a subversive religion of Zion.[5] Babylon and Zion are iconic images that reveal through the power of the religious productive imagination an iconically augmented reality by proclaiming hope through the metaphorization of meaning in the text to life in front of the text.

This article presents Paul Ricœur's hermeneutic of the productive imagination as a methodological tool for understanding the innovative social function of texts that in exceeding their semantic meaning, iconically, augment reality. Through the reasoning of Rastafari elder Mortimo Planno's unpublished text, *Rastafarian: The Earth's Most Strangest Man*, and the religious and biblical signification from the music of his most famous postulate, Bob Marley, this article applies Paul Ricœur's schema of the religious productive imagination to conceptualize the metaphoric transfer from text to life of verbal and iconic images of Rastafari's hermeneutic of word, sound and power. This transformation is accomplished through what Ricœur terms the phenomenology of the iconic augmentation of reality. Understanding this semantic innovation is critical to apprehending the capacity of the religious imagination to transform reality as a proclamation of hope in the midst of despair. In this article, these concepts will be illustrated through a joint analysis of Rastafari elder Mortimo Planno's *The Earth's Most Strangest Man* and two of Rastafari reggae performer Bob Marley's songs, 'Johnny Was' and 'No Woman, No Cry'.

## The Productive Imagination

While never systematized in his published works, in the forthcoming publication of the *Imagination Lectures*, Ricœur is explicit in his presentation of the role of the productive imagination in the historical dialectic of alienating distanciation.[6] Ricœur's *Imagination Lectures*, delivered at the University of Chicago in the fall of 1975, provide the most complete presentation of the centrality of the productive imagination in Ricoeur's thought. George H. Taylor, who transcribed these texts for a forthcoming volume, argues that

> these lectures came at a critical cusp in Ricoeur's career … At this central juncture, Ricoeur is crystallizing his thoughts on poetics (and so fulfilling in a recast way the third part of his Philosophy of Will). Imagination lies at the heart of his thinking at this time.[7]

The productive imagination enables us to be receptive to the effects of history, to receive traditions, to know where we are coming from, where we are, and where we are going. Ricœur's hermeneutic of the productive imagination interprets "cultural heritages received

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[4]Quoted in Velma Velma, *Dread Talk*, 3.
[5]Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 199.
[6]I am indebted to Dr George H. Taylor who provided me with the unpublished transcripts of Ricœur's *Imagination Lectures*. Each chapter of the transcription's pagination restarts with the numeral <1>. For the sake of clarity, page references to the transcribed lectures are provided with the chapter number followed by the page number.
[7]Taylor "Ricoeur's Philosophy of Imagination," 93.

from the past and the interest in the futuristic projections of a liberated humanity."[8] The imagination sees, and more importantly, knows, a world different from the one we experience. What is critical to understanding this capacity to imagine an alternative world is the movement from the reproductive to the productive imagination. This movement shifts the focus of philosophical reflection from the dominant approach rooted in the interiorized image to Ricœur's alternative productive imagination rooted in the framework of the semantic and linguistic orientation developed in his theory of metaphor.

Ricœur's reflection on the productive imagination begins with the question, "What is it to have an image?" He notes that a philosophical investigation into this question is immediately confronted by "a series of obstacles, paradoxes, and stumbling blocks that perhaps explain the relative eclipse of the problem of imagination in contemporary philosophy."[9]

Chief among these obstacles is the empiricist theory of knowledge that privileges reproductive imagination's focus on the interiority of the image. Ricœur's main concern is that the term "image" is generally understood as "a mental, private, and unobservable entity."[10] Ricœur rejects the traditional reproductive model of image "as first and foremost a 'scene' unfolding in some mental 'theatre' before the gaze of an internal 'spectator,'" relegating image to the realm of the interior mental representation of perception, which is inaccessible to outside observation.[11] Quoting Ricœur, who cites Kant, George Taylor notes,

> "Imagination is not at all an alternative to perception [as it is in Hume] but [is] an ingredient of perception. It's encapsulated within the framework of perception." Elsewhere in these materials Ricœur argues that "[w]e can no longer oppose … imagining to seeing if seeing is itself a way of imagining, interpreting, or thinking."[12]

The false opposition between imagination and perception is the blind alley down which philosophical reflections on imagination have stumbled.

In his 1975 *Imagination Lectures*, Ricœur identifies three inadequacies in philosophical theories of the reproductive imagination: (1) the reliance on an already existing referent; (2) the marginalization of the appearance of reality; and (3) the isolation of the image from a broader framework.[13] Theories of the reproductive imagination understand the image as referring to something that is absent, and is therefore always a derivative and never original. This model of the original as a copy that is, at best, a derivative of reality, and at worst, marginal, or an escape from reality, produces nothingness.[14] The nothingness of absence, Ricœur reasons, annihilates the object imagined, replacing it with a quasi-object or a pretend object. In either case, the imagined is unreal, "the negativity of nothingness, alongside the non-existence of the fictional object."[15] Nothingness is a fundamental trait of the object. It is the inaccuracy of the construction of the concept of nothingness that limits theories of the imagination to the reproductive. Ricœur's rejection of this nihilistic understanding of nothing in favour of a formation of nothing as the utopic *Epochě* of/from

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[8]Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 100.
[9]Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, 168.
[10]Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, 169.
[11]Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, 171.
[12]Taylor, "The Phenomological Contributions of Ricoeur's Philosophy of Imagination," 15.
[13]Ricoeur, *Imagination Lectures*, 15:1–8.
[14]Taylor, "Ricoeur's Philosophy of Imagination," 96.
[15]Ricoeur, *Imagination Lectures*, 15:2.

reality liberates the productive imagination from the referent of the image or the original, giving the productive imagination the capacity to imagine something truly new. Ricœur provisionally terms this relationship the productive referent.

The productive referent provides new insights into reality by creating its own original. "The image," Ricœur argues,

> already has a reference that is not its own reference but the reference of the perception, the possible perception of the thing, what we call the original of the copy, the original of the photograph, even the original of a painting. But we shall see that in painting we have more than a copy; we have a certain creation of its own original.[16]

The productive imagination does not create without a referent so much as, to use Ricœur's language, the referent of the productive imagination is produced by the imagination.

Ricœur contrasts the productive referent's relation to image without an original against that of the reproductive referent's relation to an image that already has an original. Such an image can only try to approximate that which it reproduces, which is not the original object's reference, but a reference of the possible perception of the object.[17] A painting, for instance, is not only a copy of an original; it is also a creation of its own origin. Within the work of a painting, framed, is the creation of a reality that is more than the image reproduced. Ricœur notes that early photography was developed for the purpose of preserving fleeting memory and fleeting images of reality. As such, it was reproductive. Painting had to distance itself from photography because it could no longer re-present reality as photography could. Impressionism emerged to overcome photography by "creating a new alphabet of colors capable of capturing the transient and the fleeting with the magic of hidden correspondences. Once more, reality was remade with an emphasis on atmospheric values and light appearances."[18]

Merleau-Ponty makes a similar observation in his essay, "Cézanne's Doubt", arguing that the result of impressionists' attempt to

> capture, in the painting, the very way in which objects strike our eyes and attack our senses … was that the canvas—which no longer corresponded point by point to nature, restored a general truth of the impression through the action of the separate parts upon one another.[19]

The emphasis on atmospheric values and light appearances, Merleau-Ponty argues, resulted in the submersion of the object being depicted, "causing it to lose its proper weight." Cézanne responds to this submersion of the object with "The use of warm colors and black that shows Cézanne wants to represent the object, to find it again behind the atmosphere … with a modulation of colors which stays close to the object's form and to the light it receives."[20]

Ricœur contrasts this marginalization of reality by the reproductive imagination with the iconic augmentation of reality by the productive imagination. From Ricœur's perspective, the object being depicted is in the frame of the painting, on the canvas, not the apple on the table that has long since rotted away. Merleau-Ponty's perception of the submersion of the proper weight of the object being depicted is suggestive of the reproductive

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[16]Ibid., 15:3.
[17]Ibid., 15:4.
[18]Ibid., 17:13.
[19]Merleau-Ponty, *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, 71.
[20]Merleau-Ponty, *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, 72.

imagination's marginalization of reality. That said, Cézanne's attempt to restore the weight of the object being depicted, despite the apparent intent to replicate reality, illustrates "a reference that is not its own reference but the reference of the perception, the possible perception of the thing."[21] Merleau-Ponty notes:

> Cézanne remarked that "as soon as you paint you draw," by which he meant that neither in the world as we perceive it nor in the picture which is an expression of that world can we distinguish between, on the one hand, the outline or shape of the object and, on the other hand the point where colours end or fade … Cézanne strives to give birth to the outline and shape of objects in the same way that nature does when we look at them: through the arrangement of colours. This is why, when he paints an apple and renders its coloured texture with unfailing patience, it ends up swelling and bursting free from the confines of the well-behaved draughtsmanship.[22]

In "Practical Theology and the Emergence of the New Self," John van den Hengel observes that Ricœur's entire philosophical project attempts to go beyond Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception.[23] Going beyond perception, Ricœur insists, ultimately requires us to both understand and accept that we must question our modern concept of reality. Specifically, Ricœur advocates overcoming modernity's fixation on the empirical verification of reality, viewing reality only as that which can conform or falsify empirical statements. In Ricœur's words,

> We have to question not only the tradition of the image as a shadow of something but also a frozen concept of reality. We tend to call reality what we know already as reality, what has been agreed on as reality.[24]

Fiction shocks our concept of reality, drawing what is generally accepted into question. Rather than accepting the repeated claim of literary critiques that poetry is only emotional and therefore can only display connotations without any truth claims, Ricœur favours Nelson Goodman's approach where "reality is made by language and remade by metaphorical discourse."[25] Leaving the question of Goodman's nominalism aside, Ricœur concludes that the construction of reality is never ending and is "as much construed by painting and poetry as by sense, but not for the same purpose."[26]

Poetry and art do not represent internalized thought, but rather, externalized creative imaginings. The need to go beyond the limits of interiorized perception leads Ricœur to search for explanations of perception that are less reliant on the intuitive, reproductive imagination of Merleau-Ponty's world of perception. The referent apple demonstrates the paradox of the non-referential referent, as the apple on the canvas "swells and bursts free from the confines of the well-behaved draughtsmanship." Ricœur explains this paradox in the context of fiction, affirming that:

> Only when we start from the fiction, which seems to be non-referential in the sense that it has no object, that a new kind of reference may be opened thanks to the absence of a real referent, of an original. Whereas the reproductive image is marginal as regards reality, it's the function of productive imagination—of the fictional—to open and change reality. Productive

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[21]Ricoeur, *Imagination Lectures*, 15:9.
[22]Merleau-Ponty, *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, 51–52.
[23]van den Hengel, "Practical Theology and the Emergence of the New Self."
[24]Ricoeur, *Imagination Lectures*, 17:15.
[25]Ibid., 17:8.
[26]Ibid., 17:8.

imagination may enlarge and even produce new worldviews, new ways of looking at things. It may finally change even our way of being in the world.[27]

## Iconic Augmentation

The image conceived as absence (as the submerged referent that has lost its proper weight) is surpassed by the image that has the capacity to change reality, to burst free from the confines of the work. Ricœur terms this the iconic augmentation of reality. Borrowing from literary critic, François Dagognet, Ricœur states that "through the image we may have an augmentation of reality and not merely a shadow within ourselves. To the extent that the image is not the copy of something exterior without an original, then it adds to reality."[28] The terms "iconic" and "augmentation", Taylor notes, bind Ricœur's phenomenology to the sense (iconic) and reference (augmentation) of reality.[29] In this respect, Ricœur's understanding of the relation between "iconic" and "augmentation" is similar to the relation between the world of the text (icon) and the world in front of the text (augmentation) which the text seeks to represent.

Taylor identifies three elements of iconic augmentation highlighted by Ricœur: (1) the externalization of creativity that increases reality; (2) the increase or expansion of reality is linked to an artistic alphabet; (3) the greater the deviation from ordinary vision and language, the greater the increase to reality.

In the first instance, the externalization of creativity, iconic augmentation, uses the medium of the creator, such as oil, paint and canvas, musical genre, or lyrical structure, as an external alternative to the mental image. The expanded reality of this alternative to the mental image, regardless of the chosen medium, is linked to an artistic alphabet that abbreviates and condenses the traits of reality.[30]

This process creates the conditions for increasing the generative power of the iconic. Using Dagognet's example of the invention of Dutch painting and the language of the laws of thermodynamics, Ricœur argues that the negative entropy of iconic augmentation resists the elimination of differentiations and tension of the entropic trend, thus allowing for the expansion and enlargement of our perception of reality.[31] This increase in generative power is followed by the third element of iconic augmentation. The greater this negative entropy is from our ordinary vision and language, to quote Taylor, "the closer it comes to the core of reality that is no longer the world of manipulable objects and the more we experience the relation to reality before its objectification."[32]

These elements of iconic augmentation have ontological consequences as they expand our horizon of understanding by opening new ways of looking at reality. In Ricœur's words, "If we start with an image without an original, then we may discover a kind of second ontology … the ontology displayed by the image itself, because it has no original."[33] In being freed from the governance of the original, fiction is able to depict and ultimately re-configure reality.

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27Ibid., 15:4.
28Ibid., 16:4.
29Taylor, "The Phenomological Contributions of Ricoeur's Philosophy of Imagination," 15.
30Ibid., 24.
31Ibid.
32Ibid., 25.
33Ricoeur, *Imagination Lectures*, 16:1.

The distinction Ricœur makes between a productive and reproductive conceptualiz-ation of the image is strikingly similar to the distinction made between religious idols and icons. "Beyond their artistic differences," Maximos Constas reminds us, "the idol and the icon indicate two modes of being, variations in the mode of visibility, which give shape to variations in the mode of divine apprehension."[34] Constas, like Ricœur, chal-lenges the Platonic disregard for the image, noting that by attempting to represent a perfect image of the divine (reproductive), the idol reduces the divine to the human gaze. Or as Constas explains,

> The idol delights in physical existence, in the delight we experience in vision itself, and its highest aim is to make that delight perceptible to us. In concretizing the splendor of the visible, the idol dazzles and so arrests our vision, confining it within a closed, selfreferential system, allowing us to see nothing outside itself. The idol consequently reduces the divine to the measure of the human gaze, arresting the movement of ascent precisely at the threshold of the invisible.[35]

"The icon", Constas continues, "aims to free vision by confronting it with the invisible, proposing to it that the boundaries of the possible are wider than they seem."[36] The icon confronts the limits of representation by using iconic images to overthrow the power of idolatrous images. In this way, icons "disrupt habituated ways of seeing, to subvert the hegemony of naturalistic representation, and so summon the eye to a new mode of vision, by opening it up to an infinite depth."[37] Or as Ricœur puts it, "Each time the new connection at which we are aiming our thought grasps what the icon describes or depicts … We iconize, if we may say, the new relations between things that we are discovering."[38]

It is through this act of iconizing, Ricœur maintains, that reality is augmented. Ricœur insists that through iconic augmentation, there is an inextricable interrelation between seeing and saying, and vision and language.

Ricœur does not conceive of a free-for-all augmentation of reality by every exteriorized thought any individual might have. Rather, he restricts his analysis of the productive imagination to *techne*, or work. A work is both an action (the work of painting or writing) and an object (a work of art/fiction). In either case, Ricœur argues that work entails an intentional framing of the productive referent. In the case of the former, com-paring painting to poetry, Ricœur declares,

> A painting must be a work or a frame while a poem is historically a kind of language game that has its own dimensions. Construing a hypothesis or a scientific model involves elabor-ating its project, its strategy for action in order to make a decision. There must always be some new project encompassing the production of imagination.[39]

The bound work of poetic language and the development of odd predicates in the metaphoric statement exemplify the productive imagination's iconic augmentation of reality. For Ricœur, the power and creativity of this iconic augmentation are in the dialectic between the verbal

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[34]Constas, *The Art of Seeing*, 292.

[35] Ibid., 292.

[36]Ibid., 292.

[37]Ibid., 292.

[38]See note 12.

[39]Ricoeur, *Imagination Lectures*, 15:6.

and the visual. Seeing and image, Ricœur insists, are ingredients of perception encapsulated in the framework of perception. Or, as Ricœur argues, "[w]e can no longer oppose … imagining to seeing, if seeing is itself a way of imagining, interpreting, or thinking."[40]

## Semantic Model of the Productive Imagination

Ricœur proposes a semantic model of the productive imagination where, in conjunction with a metaphoric use of language, the verbal and the visual are placed in a dialectical situation. "It's only when language is creative," Ricœur affirms, "that imagination is creative."[41] Liberating imagination from the interiority of the mind through a semantic approach releases the creative potential of the productive imagination. A modern theory of metaphor that stresses opening up a world creates new outlooks on the problem of the imagination. Or as Ricœur pronounces,

> We are prepared to inquire into the power of imagination, no longer as the faculty of deriving "images" from sensory experiences, but as the capacity to let new worlds build our self-understanding. This power would not be conveyed by emerging images but by emerging meanings in our language. Imagination, then, should be treated as a dimension of language. In that way, a new link would appear between imagination and metaphor.[42]

This new link is the "apperception of the sudden glimpse, of a new predicative pertinence, namely, a way of constructing pertinence in impertinence."[43] A semantic model of productive imagination opens a horizon of hope where the possible is made probable. Richard Kearney argues,

> The metaphors, symbols, or narratives produced by imagination all provide us with "imaginative variations" of the world, thereby offering us the freedom to conceive of the world in other ways and to undertake forms of action, which might lead to its transformation. Semantic innovation can thus point towards social transformation. The possible worlds of imagination can be made real by actions.[44]

The function of the productive imagination is most developed through Ricœur's analysis of a modern theory of metaphor found in a number of his published and unpublished works, including the soon to be published *The Rule of Metaphor*. In the earlier texts, "Metaphor and the Main Problem with Hermeneutics" and "Biblical Hermeneutics," Ricœur develops the link between imagination and metaphor by reorienting the rhetorical theory of metaphor[45] as at the level of semiotics and the substitution of the word, which is a modern semantic theory of metaphor in tension.[46]

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[40]Taylor, "Ricoeur's Philosophy of Imagination," 94.
[41]Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics," 110.
[42]Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics," 110.
[43]Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, 173.
[44]Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur*, 42.
[45]A rhetorical theory of metaphor recognizes metaphors as figures of discourse concerned with naming, either by stylistic choice or to fill a lexical gap. Metaphors portray a divergence between the literal or proper sense of a word, and a figurative or improper sense of the word. The resemblance between the figurative and the literal functions as the grounds for substituting the figurative sense of a word by borrowing from the literal sense of a word. Since we are operating at the level of words, the interpretation of metaphor is reduced to a semiotic interpretation, where the substitution of sense is not a semantic innovation at the level of the meaning of the sentence. Since there is no semantic innovation, metaphor gives no information about reality, and is therefore an ornamental addition to discourse, serving an emotive rather than rational function.
[46]Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*. See also Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics," 95–110. See also Ricoeur, "Biblical Hermeneutics," 77.

A modern semantic theory of metaphor concerns itself with the semantics of the encompassing sentence before the semiotics of the word. Metaphor proceeds from a tension between two terms in a metaphoric statement. Ricœur terms this tension a semantic impertinence, which is a phenomenon of predication at the level of the whole statement. The absurdity of a literal interpretation in the semantic context of the statement leads to the destruction of the literal, and a transformation of this sudden contradiction into a meaningful contradiction that makes sense. "Logical absurdity," Ricœur explains,

> create[s] a situation in which we have the choice between either preserving the literal sense of both the subject and the modifier and concluding to the meaninglessness of the whole sentence—or attributing a new meaning to the modifier such as the whole sentence makes sense … When I say, "man is a fox" (the fox has chased the wolf), I must shift from a literal to a metaphorical attribution if I want to save the sentence.[47]

A modern theory of metaphor shifts the role of resemblance from substituting the figurative sense of a word by borrowing from the literal to the role of maintaining the tension between odd predicates where the distance (and therefore absurdity) between the literal interpretation is brought closer by the figurative interpretation. This has the effect of rendering close what seems far resolved in the semantic dissonance between two seemingly incompatible ideas.

Far from being ornamental, metaphor

> consists rather in the reduction of the shock between two incompatible ideas, [and] it is in this reduction of the shift, in this *rapprochement*, that we must look for the play of resemblance. What is at stake in a metaphorical statement is making a "kinship" appear where ordinary vision perceives no mutual appropriateness at all.[48]

This semantic innovation displaces a theory of metaphor as substitution or naming, with a theory of metaphor in tension between odd predicates:

> In a theory of tension, which I am here opposing to a theory of substitution, a new signification emerges that deals with the whole statement. In this respect, metaphor is an instantaneous creation, a *semantic innovation* which has no status in established language and which exists only in the attribution of unusual predicates. In this way, metaphor is closer to the active resolution of an enigma than to simple association by resemblance. It is the resolution of a semantic dissonance.[49]

Substitution metaphors easily shift between literal and figurative meaning, but tension metaphors create new meaning, precluding the restoration of the proper meaning of the odd predicates. Ricœur concludes that the productive imagination plays a role in the transition from literal incongruence to metaphoric congruence. Based on a semantic theory of metaphor, "Imagination has to be linked to the role of likeness in the production of a new meaning, a new sentential meaning, a new predicative meaning."[50]

This modern semantic theory of metaphor leads Ricœur to a metaphoric concept of truth, recognizing that the poetic function and the rhetorical function "cannot be fully distinguished until the conjunction between fiction and re-description is brought to light."[51]

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[47]Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics," 102.
[48]Ricoeur, "Biblical Hermeneutics," 78.
[49]Ibid., 79.
[50]Ricoeur, *Imagination Lectures*, 16:8.
[51]Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 291.

The rhetorical function is the inverse of the poetic function; it only contributes ornamentation to discourse, adding nothing new to the generation of meaning. Conversely, it is the function of the poetic to seek and "re-describe reality by the roundabout route of heuristic fiction."[52]

This indirect route is undertaken by metaphor, which Ricœur describes as "that strategy of discourse by which language divests itself of its function of direct description in order to reach the mythic level where its function of discovery is set free."[53] Ricœur concludes that a metaphoric concept of truth is inescapably paradoxical: "The paradox consists in the fact there is no other way to do justice to the notion of metaphorical truth than to include the critical incision of the (literal) 'is not' within the ontological vehemence of the (metaphorical) 'is'."[54]

As previously noted, the power and creativity of the productive imagination to iconically augment reality are housed in the dialectic between the verbal and the visual. With a metaphoric use of language, verbal and visual are placed in a dialectical situation. "It's only when language is creative," it will be recalled,

> that imagination is creative … Imagination, then, should be treated as a dimension of language. In that way, a new link would appear between imagination and metaphor. Here is where we pass from the work of the imagination in the text to the world of imagination about the text.[55]

Ricœur demonstrates this semantic model of the productive imagination by developing the parallelisms between the models of the epistemological imagination and the metaphoric process of the poetic imagination. Each of the domains of the productive imagination shares a capacity for suspension and the projection of new possibilities to re-describe the world. For the social imagination, the concept of utopia is the *Epochĕ* that enables the projection of new possibilities. For the religious imagination, it is parabolization that suspends ordinary reference, enabling the projection of new possibilities. Parabolization is the metaphorization of text by the religious productive imagination through intertextuality. Ricœur explains:

> We may now approach by itself the phenomenon of parabolization through intertextuality that we have had to anticipate in order to account for the very dynamic of the narrative. I shall now take the two expressions "parabolization" and "metaphorization" as synonyms, it being understood that a metaphor can occur not only between words but between whole sequences of sentences. The isotopies play a role at this discursive level comparable to that of the semantic fields that enter into interaction in metaphor-sentences. Parabolization is the metaphorization of discourse. In the case of the narrative-parables, it consists of the metaphorization of a narrative taken as a whole. Intertextuality thus becomes an extension and consequently a particular interaction I have placed at the center of my theory of metaphor.[56]

Undergirding this understanding of metaphoric truth is a conception of the productive imagination's capacity to re-imagine, that is augment, reality by critically and imaginatively inserting the literal *is not* within the ontological vehemence of the metaphorical

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[52]Ibid., 291.
[53]Ibid., 247.
[54]Ibid., 302.
[55]Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics," 110.
[56]Ricoeur, "The Bible and Imagination," 161.

*is*. Parabolization *is* the iconic moment of metaphor that stands outside every semantic approach, transcending the text through the metaphoric transfer from text to life. The incongruence of the metaphoric statement is resolved when the world in front of the text is transformed from a proposed utopia to a probable world.

Ricœur identifies three movements in the metaphoric transfer from the work of the imagination in the text to the world imagined in front of the text: thinking, seeing and *Epochě* of sense. The first movement, thinking, produces new types of assimilations between the nearness and farness of the metaphoric statement by "seeing" similarities. The second movement, seeing, incorporates the pictorial element while avoiding a weakened sensorial model of image. Seeing introduces the formula for the constructions of icons controlled by semantics, which is "the way in which depiction occurs in predicative assimilation: something appears on which we read the new connection."[57] The third movement, *Epochě* of sense, creates an *Epochě* where the literal and descriptive sense and reference of language is suspended by the metaphorical sense and reference of the odd predicate.

Ricœur appropriates the term *Epochě* in the literary sense, as "the moment of negativity brought by the image in the metaphoric process."[58] The negation Ricœur indicates as the moment of negativity is not the place of the transcendental subject, as with Husserl, or the parasitic image he has thus far denounced. Rather, it is the negation that "appears because the image places the sense in the dimension of suspension, of *Epochě*, of fiction."[59] *Epochě* returns Ricœur to a basic understanding of meaning in the relationship between sense and reference in a metaphorical expression.

## Application to Rastafari

The first movement in the metaphoric transfer from the work of the imagination in the text to the world of imagination about the text—thinking—is illustrated by the reasoning of Rastafari elder Mortimo Planno in the text, *Rastafarian: The Earth's Most Strangest Man*. Planno writes,

> A Text is taken to draw a conclusion which can be counted upon as a test. I an I take up a Bible and opened it. So I an I began in Genesis I. Question asked who spoke? Answer given God spoke! Understand! Words are life!! I an I accept the word is God! Here. but where will we go from here?[60]

The phrase, "Question asked who spoke? Answer given God spoke! Words are life!!" illustrates the imagination's production of new types of assimilations between the nearness and farness of the metaphoric statement by "seeing" similarities. In this case, Planno begins with the act of reading, as he takes up a text. This act prompts the question, "Question asked who spoke? Answer given God spoke! Words are life." The words of the text are read by Planno, but the question asked in the text is: "who spoke?" The proclamation of the text is linked to the manifestation of creation: "God spoke!" in the declaration "Words are life!! I an I accept the word is God." Thinking "sees" the assimilation between word as text, word as sound, and word as power.

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[57]Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," 150.
[58]Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," 151.
[59]Ibid., 151.
[60]Planno, "The Earth's Most Strangest Man," 12.

Planno does not stop here, but looks beyond the text to the second movement in the metaphoric transfer from the work of the imagination in the text to the world of imagination in front of the text, i.e. seeing — illustrated by the phrases "eye to see," "appear," "look around," and "I an I." Planno declares, "God created all these beautiful things, it appear that God had *eyes* to *see* so he *looked* around and *said* come let us create man and man was created, both male and female. I an I accept that God is the word the word made into flesh and God become a man and finish creation as a man."[61] Ricœur identifies seeing as the schematization of iconic presentations, arguing that:

> By displaying a flow of images, discourse initiates changes of logical distance, generates rapprochement. Imaging or imagining, thus, is the concrete milieu in which and through which we see similarities. To imagine, then, is not to have a mental picture of something but to display relations in a depicting mode. Whether this depiction concerns unsaid and unheard similarities or refers to qualities, structures, localizations, situations, attitudes, or feelings, each time the new intended connection is grasped as what the icon describes or depicts.[62]

The iconic presentation that is schematized is the concrete milieu of creation through which Planno *sees* the similarities in God speaking creation and sharing in that creation through the incarnation of the word made flesh. I an I is the odd predicate of the metaphoric statement that represents the transfer and divinization of the self through unity with God.

This iconic representation, schematized as creation, recognizes the similarities between the words speaking, seeing and creating. Planno's assertion that "I an I accept that God is the word the word made flesh and God become a man to finish creation as a man" is thus an affirmation of a new type of assimilation between the nearness and farness of the metaphoric statement that sees similarities between God and humanity. Seeing similarities, Ricœur argues,

> is homogenous to discourse itself, which affects the logical discourse, the rapprochement itself. The place of and role of the productive imagination is there in the *insight*, to which Aristotle allude when he said that to make good metaphors is to contemplate likeness—theorein to omoion.[63]

The third movement in the metaphoric transfer from the work of the imagination in the text to the world of imagination about the text (*Epochě* of sense) is illustrated by the use of I-talk in Rastafari discourse. I-talk is a primary example of an odd predicate that Rastafari use to re-imagine and re-create the world through language. The semantics of I-talk *sees* the incarnation of the word as a split-reference, between the first person singular, the third person plural, and the incarnation of God, therefore signifying the divine principle.[64]

I an I represents the unity between the individual "I" and the divine "I," and through this unity, the unity between two or more individuals expressed as I an I. I an I is used as a

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[61]Planno, "The Earth's Most Strangest Man," 12.
[62]Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," 150.
[63]Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," 147.
[64]Edmonds, "Dread 'I' in-a-Babylon," 23–35.

subject even when it references an object "to indicate that all people are active, creative agents and not passive objects."[65]

The Rastafari term "citing-up" is a useful metaphoric statement that captures the essence of Rastafari's hermeneutic of word, sound and power. If one can get past Murrell and Williams's essentialization of Rastafari, their description is instructive:

> Essentially, Rastas have adopted an Africa-centered and free-style reading of biblical materials; but they are not united on matters of biblical interpretation, and except for the practice of citing-up the Bible, they have not defined or developed a consistent methodology for interpreting biblical texts. The art of citing-up places less emphasis on syntax, context, and literary genre of the text and more on the speaker, the setting, and the scene.[66]

Murrell and Williams's insistence on a consistent method blinds these exegetes to the underlying hermeneutic implicit in Rastafari's approach to the Bible. Despite this short-coming, Murrell and Williams provide a good description of the reasoning of citing-up:

> Citing-up involves a combination of proof text, running oral and written commentaries (in somewhat of a rabbinic style), associations of traditional myths and stories with contemporary parallels, double-intentional (i.e., having double layers of meaning) symbols, and very loose, free-style interpretations of biblical materials.[67]

Citing-up is what Ricœur identifies as the phenomenon of parabolization through intertextuality.

Metaphorically, citing refers to the citing of biblical narratives and to the sighting of the metaphoric truth between the text and the context. Additionally, citing-up refers to the reciting of the word of God in praise to Jah, and the sighting of Jah in the text and context of the ritualized action of word, sound and power. Through *citing*-up, Rastafari gain in*sights* into their lived experience in exile and the promise held out in the recognition of their divinization through the indwelling of Jah, Rastafari. Ras Planno summarizes this profoundly suspicious hermeneutic as a faith that is "unbroken regardless of propaganda." He says,

> the Bible was given finally, to our ancestors not before it was fully interpreted by Parson. But faith show I an I that words used can expound truth. WORD is Power and Power is God. The first Father in any Language I an I want to give to the world what is owed to them through the Mercy of I an I God.[68]

## Sighting-up/Seeing-as

An important vehicle that is consciously used to cite-up word, sound and power by Rastafari elders, including Mortimo Planno, is Rastafari superstar Bob Marley.[69] Bob Marley

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[65]Edmonds, "Dread 'I' in-a-Babylon," 33.

[66]Murrell and Williams, "The Black Biblical Hermeneutics of Rastafari," 328.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Planno, "The Earth's Most Strangest Man," 2.

[69]A less successful attempt to proselytize was the 2012 conversion of hip hop artist Snoop Dog, whom Rastafarian Bunnie Wailer identified as the reincarnation of Bob Marley. After initially seeming to adopt Rastafari by changing his name to Snoop Lion and growing dreadlocks, Snoop Dog publically renounced Rastafari due to his self-reported weakness for non-Ital food such as bacon. See "Rastafari Millennium Council Excommunicates Snoop Lion," *Jamaicansmusic.com*. http://www.jamaicansmusic.com/news/Music/Rastafari_Millennium_Council_Excommunicates_Snoop_Lion (accessed May 30, 2016).

was chosen by Planno and other elders to sight the truth that Babylon's power gone down as Zion stretches forth her hands. With the release of *Burnin'* in late 1973, Marley assumed the mantle of prophet sent forth from Jamaica, whose music, performances and persona proclaimed his livity in Jah, Rastafari.[70]

Bob Marley is a poet whose lyrics and music, namely works, provide us with images of life from the periphery, through his use of language. According to Ricœur, the images provided by the poet are creative works/*techne* that provide us with more than the existing order of reality. "The decisive step in this phenomenology of the work," Ricœur maintains,

> is to say that the work is language and through language, the place where the lived act, consciousness, can actually be language … This is a decisive step, because those who are unable to write directly the phenomenology of the poet can write the phenomenology of the poem. It's the poet who gives us our image. All the examples that we try to draw from ourselves are so poor. The ordinary psychology of the image—"I have an image of"—consists of giving us an existing order. Creative fancies of images come from the poet. Because the poet has brought them, we have the images as a reader. The gift of the image to the reader of the poem is the center of the gift. A psychology of inspiration is always too poor. Instead, we should place an emphasis on the poem as giving us the images in the sentence.[71]

The iconized images Bob Marley most often parabolizes are the images of Babylon and Zion. Babylon and Zion infuse Marley and the Wailers' lyrics and rhythms within individual songs and intertextuality between songs. Rastafari intellectual Dennis Forsythe paints an iconic picture of Babylon, describing it as:

> the first-person, gut-level experiences of alienation and frustration under slavery, colonialism and their legacies. It is not an imposed concept, but one that has grown out of the gut feelings and experiences of "souls on ice," and of dismembered beings. Babylon is the psychic image sustained by real life experiences, busted hopes, broken dreams, the blues of broken homes and of disjointed tribes of people trapped by history. It is an image of fire and blood, of being on the edge, in limbo, in the wilderness, in concrete jungles … It is a desolation in which man feels disjointed and out of line with the plans of creation.[72]

This image of Babylon as radical evil is confronted and overcome through repatriation to Ethiopia, reimagined in the image of Zion, the true home of Africans everywhere and the heavenly kingdom.

Marley scholar Kwame Dawes notes that the inclusion of the Nyabinghi chants, "Babylon Your Throne Gone Down" and "Fly Away Home to Zion" in the song 'Rastaman Chant' on the 1973 album *Burnin'* offered the world a clear sense of Marley and the Wailers and the Rastafari faith, "a faith that would ultimately guide everything each would do from that point on."[73] The pattern of the chants follows the pattern of Nyabinghi drumming with the first part of the songs cite/sighting the vanquishing of radical evil represented by Babylon:

I hear the words of the rasta man say
Babylon your throne gone down, gone down
Babylon your throne gone down

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[70]Livity is a combination of the words Live/Life with Divinity and denotes living in communion with Jah.
[71]Ricoeur, *Imagination Lectures*, 15: 16.
[72]In Edmonds, "Dread 'I' in-a-Babylon," 24.
[73]Dawes, *Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius*, 76.

> Said, I hear the words of the higher man say
> Babylon your throne gone down, gone down
> Babylon your throne gone down
> And I hear the angel with the seven seals
> Babylon your throne's gone down, gone down
> Babylon your throne gone down

The chant does not end with the fall of Babylon, but continues chanting, hope proclaimed in the promise of Zion.

> I say fly away home to Zion, fly away home
> I say fly away to Zion, fly away home
> One bright morning when my work is over
> Man will fly away home[74]

It is here where image confronts image, icon augments reality. Rastafari sees Ethiopia stretch out her hands as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: "for there the Lord God, Jah, Rastafari has commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."[75]

This pattern of the movement from Babylon to Zion is characteristic of both Marley's music and Rastafari theological reasoning. Rhythmically, Babylon is the heavy bass beat characteristic of reggae and Zion is the light up twang of the Akete drum.[76] The inclusion of Nyabinghi drumming, the call and response pattern of the chant and the rhythmic swaying of Bob, all indicate, as Dawes notes, that

> The song is not a dance number, and it was not recorded to be played for revelers in the dance clubs and parties. It is a sacred song and presented as such. Marley's voice is that of the leader —the chant director … It was a leadership that was musical but, more importantly, it was also a spiritual leadership.[77]

Two songs that illustrate this spiritual leadership of parabolization are 'Johnny Was' from the 1976 album, *Rastaman Vibrations*, and 'No Woman, No Cry' from the 1974 album, *Natty Dread.* 'Johnny Was' is a lyrical illustration of a narrative-parable that cites-up the violence of Babylon through a "son's death being so stark as to be brutal." The story is that of a Jamaican ghetto rudie who is shot in the street, leaving his mum wondering where she went wrong. Marley sings:

> Woman hold her head and cry,
> 'Cause her son had been shot down in the street and died
> From a stray bullet.

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[74]Marley, 'Rastaman Chant'.

[75]Hales, *Inlology*.

[76]Akete drums are used in Nyabinghi music. For further details see the following links: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akete and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rc21fNvEPHk

[77]Dawes, *Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius*, 76. Marley's prophetic potential was recognized and nurtured by his spiritual advisor, Mortimo Planno. It was he who introduced Marley to the profoundly sacramental knowledge of "I an I" as the manifestation of the indwelling of Jah, Rastafari, which Marley proclaimed throughout the world. Given Ricœur's identification of the biblical polyphony of names for God, this article concludes that Rastafari's semantic innovation is not the naming of God, but rather, the proclamation of "I an I" as "pieces of God". See Rex Nettleford, "Discourse on Rastafarian Reality," in *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader*, 311–325 (315).

Woman hold her head and cry;
Explaining to her was a passerby
Who saw the woman cry (cry)
Wondering how can she work it out,
Now she knows that the wages of sin is death, yeah!
Gift of Jah is life. (life)
She cried: Ah-um, I – I know!
"Johnny was a good man," I – I know! (never did a thing wrong)
"Johnny was a good, good, good, good, good, good, good, good,
good, good, good man," (Johnny was good man)
she cried – she crie-ie-ie-ie-ie-ie-ie-ied![78]

Some commentators have interpreted the lyric, "Now she knows that the wages of sin is death, yeah! / Gift of Jah is life. (life)" as a clear indication that Marley believed that had Johnny been brought up Rastafari, none of this would have happened.[79] Textually, Dawes notes that the lyrical structure is more complicated, arguing that terms like "stray bullet" and "shot by the system" indicate that it is Babylon and nothing else that is responsible for the death and violence that were a daily occurrence in the streets of Kingston in the '70s and '80s. By naming this death and violent Babylon together, Marley is drawing attention to the injustice and suffering of life on the periphery, thereby changing perception of street violence in the concrete jungle.

However one interprets it, the song concludes with Marley as the narrator "beside the women":

Wo-ooh! Woman hold her head and cry,
As her son had been shot down in the street and died
Just because of the system. (system)
Woman hold her head and cry;
Comforting her I was passing by.
She complained, then she cry:
Oh-ooh-wo-ah, cry (ah-ah), yeah, I know now (ah-ah),
no I know, I know now: (Johnny was a good man)
Said I know, mm-mm-mm-mm-mm. (Never did a thing wrong)
Ah! Ah! (Johnny was a good man)
Can a woman tender care, she cried, (Never did a thing wrong)
Cease towards the child she bear? (Johnny was a good man)
Wo-ho-ho-ooh! Woman cry, woman (Never did a thing wrong)
She cried, wo-oh! She cried, yeah! (Johnny was a good man)
Can a woman tender care
Cease towards the child she bear? (Never did a thing wrong)
Wo-now, cry! (Johnny was a good man)[80]

[78]Marley, 'Johnny Was'.
[79]McCann and Hawke, *Bob Marley*, 74.
[80]Marley, 'Johnny Was'.

Once again at the women's side, Marley tries to comfort her, and as she repeats "Johnny was a good man" … "I know, I know, I know," he joins her in the lamentation.

Dawes submits that the grace in the song lies not in condemnation of the individual, but in Marley's determination to humanize the men who were being killed each day on the streets of Kingston.

The final lyrics, "Can a woman tender care / Cease towards the child she bear?" is a direct allusion to Isaiah 49:15, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Dawes concludes that with this proclamation, Marley

> stands as a prophet looking at the hardships experienced by his people in Babylon, exemplified by this moment in which the system destroys a man and prophecies that Jah will not forget. The allusion complicates the song, turning it into a remarkable expression of faith and hope in the midst of tragedy[81]

As a prophet, Marley affirms the dignity and innocence of those crushed by Babylon. Johnny does not die because of his personal sins, some moral flaw or lack of faith in Jah, but is killed by Babylon. This interpretation is intertextually supported by the 1978 song, 'No Woman, No Cry'. In the first section of the song, Marley remembers life in Trenchtown, and the "Good friends we have, oh, good friends we've lost / Along the way (way)." While not a direct allusion to 'Johnny Was', it is an invocation of good friends lost, and comforting a crying woman brings to mind the narrative-parable of 'Johnny Was'.

> Said said
> Said I remember when we used to sit
> In the government yard in Trenchtown
> Oba, ob-serving the hypocrites
> As they would mingle with the good people we meet
> Good friends we have had, oh good friends we've lost along the way
> In this bright future you can't forget your past
> So dry your tears I say
> No woman, no cry
> No woman, no cry
> Oh my Little sister, don't shed no tears
> No woman, no cry
> Said, said, said I remember when we used to sit
> In the government yard in Trenchtown
> And then Georgie would make the fire light
> Log wood burnin' through the night
> Then we would cook corn meal porridge
> Of which I'll share with you.[82]

Between the two narrations of memories, one of friends lost, the other of the comradery of sharing a simple meal, is the title refrain, "No woman, no cry." Although written "No cry,"

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[81]Dawes, *Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius*, 163–64.
[82]Marley, 'No Woman, No Cry'.

the audio of Marley singing this lyric is closer to the Jamaican patois word "Nuh," the meaning of which is closer to "don't," as in, "don't cry."[83]

The repetition of the chorus is similar to the lamentation shared by Marley in the narrative-parable 'Johnny Was'. Heard side by side, it is not too difficult to imagine the narrator in 'Johnny Was' comforting the women with the refrain, "No woman, no cry."

After warning against forgetting this past, the song moves into the great future, as the tempo speeds up to match the lyrics.

> My fear is my only courage
> So I've got to push on thru
> Oh, while I'm gone
> Everything's gonna be alright, everything's gonna be alright
> Everything's gonna be alright, everything's gonna be alright
> Everything's gonna be alright, everything's gonna be alright
> Everything's gonna be alright, everything's gonna be alright
> So woman no cry, no, no woman no cry.[84]

With the repetition, "Everything's gonna be alright," Marley proclaims hope that despite (or rather, in spite of) the suffering and lamentation of friends lost, wailed in 'Johnny Was', everything is going to be alright as we push on through Babylon on to Zion. This hope in Zion despite suffering in Babylon is expressed through faith in the righteousness of Jah, Rastafari, grounded in the chant, "Babylon, Your Throne Gone Down, Fly Away Home."

As a prophet of Rastafari, Marley's music and lyrics exemplify a consistent hermeneutic method of parabolization through word, sound and power. By citing-up the historical, social, political and economic context of slavery, colonialism, racism and oppression as *seen* through the lens of biblical text, in dialogue with the narrative and images of extra-biblical texts,[85] Marley chants down the evil of Babylon, while casting our gaze to hope in Zion. The movement between the figurative and the literal, past and current, personalities and events in scripture, and personalities and events in the world today, are all inventions of the concept of metaphoric truth, a truth that Ricœur concludes is inescapably paradoxical. This paradox, Ricœur maintains, "consists in the fact there is no other way to do justice to the notion of metaphorical truth other than to include the critical incision of the (literal) 'is not' (Johnny was …) within the ontological vehemence of the (metaphorical) 'is' (Johnny *is* a good man)."[86] Marley's music, so conceptually framed by the religious productive imagination, iconically augments the reality of the radical evil of Babylon by projecting an even more radical hope in Zion. By enlarging our hermeneutic horizon, our gaze shifts beyond the ordinary, and for some, suspect canons of sacred texts. The veil is removed for those who have eyes to see, allowing us to see the canon within the canon which is the truth, the word made flesh, written on the other half of the heart.[87]

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[83]In Jamaican Patois, the word "no" (or "nuh") when used in a specific context means "don't"; hence the English translation of "No woman, no cry" would be "No woman, don't cry." In the song, Bob Marley is telling the woman not to cry because everything is going to be alright.

[84]Marley, 'No Women, No Cry'.

[85]See Southard, "Modern Ethiopia," 679–738.

[86]Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 302.

[87]Murrell and Williams, "The Black Biblical Hermeneutics of Rastafari," 328.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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